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JAZZ JOURNALISM

JAZZ JOURNALISM

The Story of the Tabloid Newspapers

By SIMON MICHAEL BESSIE

ILLUSTRATED

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First Edition

To

PAUL H. BUCK

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THE tabloid has entrenched itself deeply in the habits of our times. We need only pause upon a street in New York and watch the children at play. A group of girls are skipping rope. Among the chants they sing to ageless rhythms is this one :

Toots and Caspar went to town
Tootsie bought an evening gown,
Caspar bought a pair of shoes
Buttercup bought the Daily News.
How many pages did he read?
Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, etc.

The history of a people is written in its newspapers—exaggerated history, perhaps, and somewhat out of focus, but living, breathing history. In modern times the newspaper has become the literary expression of the people, providing us with our heroes and villains, our education and inspiration, our release and much of our entertainment. Only in a limited sense, however, is the newspaper the creator of the material it contains. Like all businesses, the great modern daily is engaged in marketing a commodity; its very existence

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depends upon its ability to please the public. It is, then, a mirror of the day reflecting the issues, events, personalities and attitudes of its age. And, of all journalistic styles, none is more truly reflective of the climate of post-War America than the tabloid.

On the morning of June 26, 1919, two days before the signing of the Versailles Treaty, a new daily newspaper appeared in New York City. The newcomer was called the *Illustrated Daily News* and it was as different as it was new.

At first glance one might almost have mistaken it for a magazine, so little did it resemble the customary American newspaper. Its page was barely more than half the size of the traditional newspaper page and, with the exception of a single headline and some small type, it was covered entirely with pictures. The style was new to America but in England it had already become the most popular newspaper form, called "tabloid" because of its smallness and its concise presentation of the news.

Opinion among the experts was almost unanimous in declaring that this first American tabloid could not last a month. Too small, they said, too little news, just another fad. Two years later, the *Daily News* had acquired the largest following of any newspaper in New York City and by 1938 its circulation had soared to more than 1,750,000 on weekdays and 3,250,000 on Sundays. Both figures were far greater than those attained by any other daily newspaper in America.

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And all over the country, in large cities and small towns, tabloids had sprung up and become accepted parts of the American scene.

Embalmed in their arresting pictures and bold headlines are the happenings and persons which comprise the folklore of our times, more so than in the conventional newspaper because from the start the tabloid identified itself completely with the common people. It concentrated upon their interests, dramatized their heroes and villains, responded with keen sensitivity to their needs and spoke their language. Listen again to vox populi, this time speaking in the *New York World* of May 27, 1926 :

THE TABLOID READERS OFFER ASSISTANCE TO THE TABLOID
EDITOR AND THE TABLOID REPORTER

The Student

“Say, what’s the matter with you guys,
Beefin’ ’bout how hard your jobs are?
You’ll take it easy if you’re wise
And get some pictures where the gobs are.

That’s the stuff I like.”

The Park Bencher

“Your paper could be sold all right
If you’d go just a little foider.
I ain’t no judge, but seems you might
Dig up a story on some moider.

THAT’S the stuff I like!”

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The Steno

“Some kinds of news can give girls thrills—
You know as well as I do which, man,
Why don't you print a bunch of stills
When some poor girl has wed a rich man?

That's the stuff I LIKE!”

The Reformer

“Dear Sirs: I wish your rotten sheet
Would print things of the kind I care for.
Old Coney's crowded in this heat—
What do you think the girls are there for?”

Chorus

Oh, print us views without much news
Of nudes and sheiks and racing horses,
Knife-battles, mobs, kidnapping clues,
Fire-setting fiends, love theft divorces.
Let's have some warships, railroad wrecks,
A riot caused by racial trouble,
True stories, contests and some sex—
Why, in a week your sales will double.

For THAT'S THE STUFF WE LIKE!

LOU WEDEMAR

This was the formula upon which the new type of newspaper was basing its appeal for popularity, a formula as ancient as men's interest in birth, death, love and violence. But the candid application of the eternal human phenomena to a daily newspaper was a

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shock to the vocal elements in the community and the tabloid was soon attacked with passionate bitterness. In an article entitled "Those Terrible Tabloids" in the *Independent*, S. T. Moore found them to be "an unholy blot on the fourth estate—they carry all the news that isn't fit to print."

Mr. Aben Kandel, an active publicist, gave the *Forum* a list of "Tabloid Offenses," concluding that they "reduce the highest ideals of the newspaper to the process of fastening a camera lens to every boudoir keyhole." And Oswald Garrison Villard added his authoritative voice to the chorus with ". . . no journalist of the 90's ever sank to quite such depths of vulgarity, sensationalism and degeneracy as do the tabloids in New York today."

Speaking for the respectable elements in the community, a *Herald Tribune* reader contributed this comment to the letter column in January, 1928:

"A small boy found a tabloid last week. He is a healthy boy, but of sensitive fiber . . . He was a little hysterical at supper that night . . . He screamed out in his sleep . . . He was feverish and he babbled considerably about chairs . . . Even the pleasant, familiar chairs in his own little bedroom filled him with delirious horror.]

"Off with their heads! commands the growing tabloid. The more children who can be put off their heads, the more borderline cases and psychoses and paranoiacs we'll have, and by the same token, the more murders

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—more and better murders—we'll have for stirring up circulation. Stir up the imagination of the incipient paranoiac and he'll make us news. And we'll get second story men to take the pictures.

“Aren't any of the psychologists, the alienists, the Freudians, the scientists and the thinkers for humanity going to do anything about the tabloids?”

“You see, Mr. Hope, you are all wrong about capital punishment.”

Although the death penalty was not invoked by many of the other anti-tabloid crusaders, the violence and moral horror which permeates this letter were characteristic of the campaign. By the middle twenties, the tabloid had become a genuine and full-fledged Menace, certain, in the opinion of right-thinking people, to disrupt the home, ruin the morals of the youth and precipitate a devastating wave of crime and perversion. Nor was this belief to be found only in the utterances of the pulpit and of those who appoint themselves guardian over the community's moral welfare. As our memories readily recall, the certainty that the tabloid was a danger-laden organ of vulgarity and evil was almost universal throughout the middle and upper ranges of the social ladder.

To be sure, there were occasional quiet voices which spoke in less positive, simple terms. In the same issue of the *Forum* which had printed Mr. Kandel's dissertation, Martin Weyrauch said, “Tabloids were just as inevitable as jazz. They are as truly expressive of

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modern America as World Series baseball, skyscrapers, radio, movies." It is interesting to note in passing that each of the innovations which Mr. Weyrauch had selected as symbols of our times was greeted with the same storm of moral opposition which surrounded the tabloid.

The historian Charles Beard in his *Rise of American Civilization* which was published in 1927, found that ". . . it could hardly be said that the patterns created by tabloid pictures were less authentic or more inimical to intelligent citizenship than the substance of the more reputable papers—the vast flood of political speeches and innumerable Associated Press dispatches masquerading as 'news' on the authority of 'someone near the President' or on the basis of 'it is said' or no foundation at all except the secret inspiration of some interested official or powerful individual, unnamed in the text, or of some partisan reporter."

Such heresies were scarcely heard above the general cry of protest. After all, Weyrauch was an editor of the unspeakable *Graphic* and Beard was a known cynic who believed in economic explanations of the Constitution. Respectable Americans were convinced that the tabloids were wholly bad.

Expressions of public opinion in the United States, it has been observed, are marked by "a curious alternation and irrelevance, as between weekdays and Sabbaths, between American ways and American opinions." The national attitudes form many spectacular

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contrasts with the facts of national life and frequently it seems almost as if the attitude expressed a desire to escape from the reality rather than an effort to describe it.

Each phase of popular opinion in America is colored by this curious unreality. Where other peoples accept the inevitability of prostitution and seek to regulate it in practical fashion, American communities present a united front in pretending that prostitution does not even exist. In actuality, as everybody knows, prostitution flourishes as richly in America as anywhere else but the actuality is not allowed to tarnish the bright sheen of popular opinion.

Perhaps the strongest pillar of our social thinking is the passionate conviction that the United States is a country without social classes. It is not considered good taste to dwell upon the tremendous distance that visibly separates the mass of the people from the wealthy few and when the reality of class hostility becomes so apparent that it cannot be ignored it is considered demagogical to remark upon it in public. Other countries, of course, have similar class stratifications but nowhere is the effort to gloss them over more determined than in America.

In the economic sphere these contrasts between popular belief and fact are so numerous and so profoundly rooted that merely to describe the realities of our economic structure in factual terms is to mark oneself a hostile and dangerous critic. The entire business

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framework is garbed in a myth of name and ceremony which bears little relation to the facts but is, nevertheless, universally accepted as descriptive of the actuality. And what could be more dramatically at variance with reality than the words with which we conventionally describe our political life?

These phenomena, to be sure, exist in other countries but in the United States they have attained an unequalled development. Probably, it is necessary for the maintenance of the social order that popular opinion be based upon aspiration and faith rather than actuality and fact and, in itself, this would not be particularly objectionable. But the effect of this way of thinking is to wrap things in a cloud of morality which obliterates their real meaning and significance. As Santayana has expressed it, "Certain pledges have preceded inquiry and divided the possible conclusions beforehand into the acceptable and the unacceptable . . . the noble and the base."

Weighed in this fashion, the tabloid newspaper was found soon after its appearance to be "inacceptable . . . base." The judgment was implicit in the method of examination. Approached as a moral question, the tabloid was inevitably destined to be ostracized by respectable opinion. But, in settling the morality of the new newspaper style, the important point was missed.

The tabloid undeniably presents many interesting questions in journalistic and social morality. It would

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be quite easy to generate considerable heat over such matters as the comparative moral value of pictures as against words, or the ultimate effect upon the community of such phrases as LOVE NEST and HEART BALM SUIT. But the quantity of heat produced would much exceed the light and there would be no time left for more significant matters. Why did the tabloid appear? What actually is it? What is its story? What does it mean?

These are the questions with which this book is concerned. If we can come to an understanding of their answers we shall have told much more than the story of the tabloid newspapers. We shall also have looked into the heart of post-War America.

The tabloid was part of a pattern which included speakeasies, jazz, collegiate whoopee, bathing beauties, movie-star worship, big-time sports and many other gigantic exaggerations. And, as these characteristics of the twenties were but manifestations of deeper forces which were sweeping through American life, so the tabloid was a journalistic mirror of the era.

But, the tabloid was not limited to the pre-depression years either in life or in spirit. When the post-War abandon vanished into the grim sobriety of the depression, the picture paper continued to advance in popularity. The newspaper style which had been labeled a fad and identified with the search for sensation continued to flourish when people had turned to a search for security.

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There is an interesting parallel between the tabloid and another great symbol of the twenties, jazz. It too was denounced as vulgar, depraved and vicious and learned opinion was agreed that it could not last long. People no longer regard the continued existence of jazz as a subject for wonder. There is a growing realization that jazz is the true rhythm for the American songs of our times, a musical development with a respectable ancestry and a sound basis in popular needs and desires.

Just so with the tabloid. Although less than twenty years have passed since its appearance in America, the tabloid has become an important, established part of the national scene. The original stigma persists but a true reading of the legend would show that the tabloids "are legitimate heirs of the Fourth Estate. All their characteristics are inherited from their ancestors or acquired from their big brothers. None of their practices but has been sanctified by journalistic tradition or accepted as present-day custom."

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THE tabloid is the most modern form of newspaper, a product not only of the twentieth century but of the century's most up-to-date techniques and attitudes. Yet, its ancestry dates back farther than that of the traditional newspaper. Centuries before the advent of the written word, the birth ledger of the tabloid was inscribed upon the walls of man's primitive cave dwelling. These cave drawings are customarily pre-empted by the historians of art and manners but they belong just as properly to the annals of journalism. In the vivid, crystallized form of pictures they portrayed the events and characteristics of their time. The newspaper can do little more. Journalism began in pictures and thousands of years later the tabloid returned it to the infant medium.

Similar antiquity is woven into each strand of the story. The tabloid sprang from an interaction of social, economic and journalistic trends which are basic to any understanding of the tabloid. Apart from its relationship to the society in which it exists, the tabloid can have little meaning. To understand this relationship—in fact, to understand the tabloid—it is neces-

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sary to review certain of the forces which combined to produce the society of our times. These forces, of course, were set in operation much farther back in time than it is convenient to venture. As an opening date it will be well to choose one that coincides with the visible emergence of the present mechanical era. This prologue begins at the end of the Civil War for it was then that modern America first came into view.

In its causes and more particularly in its effects, the struggle concluded in the sudden April quiet at Appomattox was no mere conflict between sections; it was a true revolution, the most far-reaching the United States has yet known. Fought in the name of Slavery, States' Rights and other phrases whereby homicide is customarily rationalized, the war accomplished results much more fundamental than emancipation of the Negroes and fusion of the Union, vital as these achievements may have been. It signified with finality that the static, planters' civilization defended by the South was an anachronism. The nation was placed solidly upon the course of the dynamic industrial culture which had already come to dominate the North.

The war spelled ruin and desolation for the South but it brought great prosperity to the North and West. Freed from the political burden of Southern anti-tariff, anti-industrial demands, the triumphant North began, even before the war was over, to wrest from the richness of the soil a new civilization of unimag-

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ined wealth and complexity. This revolution was accomplished behind the scenes. But, even though it was not then apparent, the formulation of a mechanical era was proceeding at almost astronomical speed. During these years there emerged the economic and social tendencies which produced the modern American city and the mass journalism in which it is reflected. Sweeping through the post-war years, these forces brought swift, profound change to every detail of the American scene. Their story is the background of the tabloid.

“Underlying all the varied developments that made up American life is the momentous shift of the center of national equilibrium from the countryside to the city.” For two hundred and fifty years America had been a land of almost wholly rural nature. Separated by vast expanses of forest, mountain and plain, its people had lived in small clustering groups, drawing their living and their culture from the soil. Cities had dotted the coasts and begun to crop up in the midlands but, still in 1860, the dominant unit of national life was the farm. The prevailing political and economic power was agrarian, the culture, manners and even the journalism of the land were predominantly rural. As yet there was little to upset Jefferson’s faith in an American utopia of honest yeomen—rugged, freedom-loving men tilling the earth and living in democratic simplicity.

By 1890, three decades later, the change had been

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so complete that the honest farmer had begun his metamorphosis into the "hick," the undulating sylvan acres were becoming the "sticks." In 1860, towns of over 8,000 population had claimed but sixteen per cent of the population of the entire country. By 1890, the figure had jumped to almost thirty per cent. In thirty years the traditions and the ways of centuries had been left irretrievably behind. The City had risen and begun to cast its towering shadow over the land.

Augmented by a swelling invasion from abroad, by a phenomenally increasing home population and by emigrants from the farm, the teeming urban centers commanded the position of political, social and cultural domination. The entire nation engaged in a race for material wealth and a richer economic life. The pace was set in the cities. So rapid, so complete was this rise of the city that even before the century had ended a reaction had set in against its power—the Populist Movement.

Although a major portion of the population continued to live upon the soil, America's destiny was now working itself out among the congested urban masses. For leadership in everything from styles in clothing to forms of entertainment, the nation turned to the City. To journalism this meant the passing of the old-style newspaper of quiet habits, leisurely pace and elevated standards. Newspapers run by one dynamic person who tended their every function from the writing of editorials to the setting of type were no longer possible.

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The journalism of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Peter Porcupine and Horace Greeley slipped back into the mists of sentiment. The City demanded a swifter, more popular form for its crowds, a journalism for the masses.

Behind the rise of the City and primarily responsible for its growth was the basic impulse of the period—the onward rush of an ever accelerating industrialization. In the thirty years following the Civil War the population doubled, swelling to 62,000,000 in 1890 and thrusting the frontier farther West until its disappearance was announced in 1890. The westward movement had given Americans a safety valve of cheap land and easy adventure. When the frontier fell into the Pacific a new outlet had already been provided by the spread of modern industry.

Having achieved its geographical entity and solidified its political structure, the nation, still bursting with pioneer vitality, now devoted itself to the quest of wealth and empire. Implemented by an endless succession of mechanical wonders and stimulated by the acquisitiveness of the industrial giants who have been aptly named the Robber Barons, American energies were turning to exploitation of the continent's natural resources.

A feast of great richness was laid out before these knights of the board-room table. The earth was fairly erupting with iron, coal and oil and powerful machines were at hand to extract and refine the raw

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wealth. Swift locomotives were ready to transport it to newly rising factories where a large and vigorous laboring stock, unorganized and eager for prosperity, was ready to accomplish any task that might be set before it. The protected home market was the greatest history had ever seen and the world market for American products was expanding. As a final treat there was a benevolent government ready to dispense land and privilege and, when necessary, wink a sly glance at questionable practices. It was capitalism's most splendid orgy.

In a few short decades the country was carried to a stage of civilization characterized by tremendous industrial and financial empires, huge factory and office laboring masses, intense concentration of economic enterprise and power, swift multiplication of mechanical contrivances and an ever-broadening standardization of daily life. To grasp the changes wrought during this period it is necessary only to glance at any feature of modern life. There is hardly a single detail, however common, which would have been possible before 1860. The houses we live in, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the entertainments we enjoy, the vehicles that transport us—every phase of our daily life is stamped with the accomplishments of the nineteenth century's last three decades. In thirty years the physical characteristics of human living changed more radically than they had in the thousands of years since civilization began.

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Statistics are powerless to portray so great a revolution, and for those who desire figures a wealth of minutely calculated sums is readily available in any one of innumerable texts. But, statistics have a certain charm and through centuries of skillful abuse have maintained their reputation as the backbone of argument so it may be well to throw the spotlight on a few of the more interesting summations, recalling all along that each soaring figure represented another step toward the emergence of mass journalism.

Vivid indication of the wave of prosperity is given by the figures on national wealth. In 1860 it was estimated at \$16,159,616,000 and by 1890 it had risen to \$65,037,091,000. While the total wealth of the nation was growing by almost four hundred per cent, the per capita distribution of the gains rose only one hundred per cent—from \$513 in 1860 to \$1,038 in 1890. With the growth of great corporations, holding companies and trusts, America was becoming the property of an increasingly exclusive group.

Phenomenal gains were made in each field of industry and commerce. Between 1860 and 1890 the total number of factories increased from 140,000 to 355,000 and the value of domestic manufactures multiplied nine times. Railroad mileage leaped from 30,000 to 163,000 and welded the vast expanses of the country into a fairly compact unit. Postal route mileage jumped from 227,000 to 427,000 and a great new web of telegraph wires stretched into the most hidden

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corners. The material for the dawning machine age was provided by production increases of roughly 1,000 per cent in coal, 10,000 per cent in oil, 900 per cent in iron. Although it had just started in 1860, the steel industry was producing 4,277,071 tons annually by 1890.

In every other field the figures echo this note. By 1890 industrialization had provided journalism with every tool needed for turning out huge-circulation dailies—high speed linotypers and presses, typewriters, metal for type, wires to make news instantaneous, swift transportation, huge accretions of capital to turn journalism into big business. America's economic revolution, condensed into less than half a century, produced all the needs of the mass journalism which was to develop in the Nineties.

Only one primary requisite of mass journalism was now lacking—a great reading public of simple tastes and rudimentary education. This was supplied with a rapidity and prodigality typical of the period. Since its earliest days, America had been a nation of avid news consumers but newspaper circulation had been limited to fairly small groups. Widespread reading of daily newspapers had not been possible among a people subjected to the exhausting physical demands of the struggle against an untamed soil. But the chief obstacle to extensive circulation had been the relatively narrow scope of elementary education. Although the Republic had prided itself upon its democratic educational sys-

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tem the actual number who mastered the fundamentals sufficiently to develop the reading habit had been small. In correcting this situation the late nineteenth century made its third basic contribution to the genesis of mass journalism.

No campaign of this crusading era was more successful than the drive for widespread elementary education. To the numerous heroes it had created, the period now added that arch-villain, the truant officer. By 1890 the nation-wide wave of school construction and compulsory attendance laws had raised school attendance in proportion to population to twice the pre-Civil War level. Over 13,000,000 of the nation's 18,000,000 persons between the ages of five and eighteen were now being forcibly exposed to public education. That the inoculation "took" is attested by the rapid increase in national literacy which was estimated in 1900 as more than ninety per cent, a rise of more than ten per cent in twenty years.

Equipped with the three R's and little more, these new readers naturally did not advance immediately to the upper rungs of the literary ladder. As yet "the average American had not advanced in his formal training beyond the attainments of the fourth or fifth grade of the elementary school." He would be attracted only by printed matter of the simple, striking sort which aims at the lowest common denominator. He was perfectly tailored for the uncomplicated sensationalism of mass journalism.

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Equally important additions to this semi-literate reading public were made during the period by the swelling tide of immigrants who poured over the dam of European repression and flowed into every section of the promised land, concentrating in the large cities. The nation which had been created and developed by immigrants had never experienced an inflow of such gigantic proportions as that which followed the Civil War. From 1865 to 1900 more than 13,000,000 foreign-born were added to the native population. Many of these new Americans adhered at first to their native language but, as the waves of nationalism, Americanization, compulsory education and adult-improvement swept over the land, they too came to draw upon the simpler kinds of American reading matter.

* * * *

Many other threads would have to be woven into any design which pretended to portray the full nature of the changes which the post-Civil War period witnessed in the United States. But the three basic impulses which have been briefly noted were the major architects of the civilization which arose and the journalism in which it was presently to be reflected. Industrialization led to the consolidation of economic enterprise and the triumph of the big business technique; it was accompanied and augmented by the invention and development of those numerous mechanical devices

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which named the new era the Machine Age. The urbanization of the formerly rural nation was accomplished by the sweep of economic forces aided by an unprecedented multiplication of the population. A vast, receptive reading public of limited capacities and rudimentary taste was created by the spread of primary education and the influx of a tidal wave of immigration.

These background tendencies not only produced the physical factors which made mass journalism possible; they also formulated the psychological changes which made it inevitable. American life had always been marked by restlessness. Now its tempo increased to the rapid beat of machinery. Speed became the keynote, on the farm as well as in the city. The average man wanted everything, including his news, delivered with utmost rapidity. As his mental horizon broadened, his curiosity extended over an enlarged variety of subjects and he began to demand all the news. The advance of communication and transportation brought him into more frequent contact with other regions and he wanted to know what was happening everywhere.

Uprooted from the security of agrarian life and unable to find an outlet in the West, the nation turned to a search for material riches. While a few achieved the goal of wealth, most found it necessary to seek escape from the increasing monotony of everyday life, the oppressive truth of factories, poverty and industrial slavery. Worldly, sophisticated, increasingly

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disillusioned, the common people searched for new diversions and new entertainments.

Their appeal was answered in the Nineties with the appearance of the greatest of modern circuses, the bright, sensationally diverting daily newspaper which was later to develop into the twentieth century's tabloid.

YELLOW JOURNALISM



THE two decades after the Civil War were a period of little change in American journalism. With few exceptions the newspapers continued their adherence to pre-War methods and wartime attitudes. Not until after the economic revolution had brought profound change to every other phase of American life did journalism respond to the new conditions and evolve the technique of the modern mass newspaper.

Journalism's revolution came only when the potential profits to be secured from newspapers of huge circulation became so clear that the change occurred almost overnight. This does not mean to imply that all American publishers since 1870 have been governed solely by the money urge, nor does it seek to establish profit-seeking as the sole cause of change in journalism. But it does signify the basic fact of the nineteenth century journalistic revolution. The daily newspaper became a branch of large-scale industry producing a commodity which was no longer governed by the dictates of the literary sanctum but was subject for its life to the rules of the market place.

Behind the numerous innovations which marked

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the advent of a "new" journalism was this essential determining factor which has been embodied in the economic axioms of modern newspaper management. No longer could the sky-rocketing costs of urban newspapers be met with the few pennies for which papers must be sold. For the imperative increase in revenue, publishers were forced to turn to the rapidly expanding field of advertising where the test of desirability was not the quality of a paper but the number of its readers. Circulation became the major if not the sole aim of newspaper endeavor and popular acceptance the only standard by which editorial policies and methods were judged.

These are the platitudes of "practical" newspaper operation, but their universal acceptance dates back only to the late years of the last century. It was then that the daily newspaper became a commodity, dividing itself necessarily into two basic class types according to the type of market it strove to capture. Henceforth there were to be papers designed for the masses and papers for the more educated classes.

To serve the comfortable classes there would be papers like Adolph Ochs' *New York Times*, based upon the principle that accurate news is a commodity which can be sold successfully in large doses if written with care and editorial sympathy for the conservative tastes of society's top layer. For the masses there was need of papers more elementary in technique, attracting their huge followings by unrelenting exploitation of

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James Gordon Bennett's cynicism that "the newspaper's function is not to instruct but to startle." Sensationalized appeal to the old, reliable and universal curiosities was the sure key to mass interest and the popular newspaper subjected itself completely to the ancient publisher's command, "Raise Hell and Sell Papers!"

Hated by all who hold serious views of journalism's function and, therefore, a most successful newspaper technique, yellow journalism contained nothing essentially new. But, it was such a skillful variation on the old, proven themes and so perfectly in harmony with the spirit of modern America that it has satisfied four generations without significant alteration. The epithet "yellow" has lost much of its strength but the yellow methods continue to be the foundation of mass journalism, and are practised today in some degree by most American dailies. "Whatever its merits, the yellow press rose and flourished in the gilded age preparing the way for the cheap illustrated daily which sank its tentacles still deeper into the strata of the faintly literate." The tabloid drama opens on the late nineteenth century stage with the melodrama of Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst.

The invention of yellow journalism is generally attributed to Hearst and its beginning is customarily dated from the Spanish-American War. Both designations are convenient but quite misleading.

It is certainly true that the yellow technique has

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had no more persistent or successful advocate than the Lord of San Simeon but he did not invent the methods by which he has achieved his pinnacle of power. It is doubtful that he ever invented anything. The Hearst millions have always found it easier to purchase than to fuss with the bothersome job of originating. His newspaper principles were bought, borrowed and in major part stolen from Joseph Pulitzer who devised the "new" journalism because he realized that a modernized sensationalism was the only certain way to attract the average man. It is also true that no single event gave greater impetus to sensational journalism than the comic opera war in Cuba, but the technique was completely formulated and widely successful long before the war was anything more than a super-patriot's dream.

"There is not a newspaper editor in New York," said Whitelaw Reid in 1879, "who does not know the fortune that awaits the man there who is willing to make a daily paper as disreputable and vile as a hundred and fifty thousand readers would be willing to buy. It is the newspaper opportunity of the time." Whether it was the strength of his moral fiber or the already satisfying sufficiency of his worldly goods which deterred Mr. Reid from taking advantage of the opportunity we shall probably never know, but the record shows that Joseph Pulitzer was not a man to cringe at the prospect of editing a paper for 150,000 readers—or a million.

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Within less than ten years and without reducing himself to the wretched level portrayed by Reid, he was producing America's first modern newspaper, eagerly read each day by more people than any previous daily in the United States. His entrance, as the historians are fond of saying, marks the beginning of the new epoch in American journalism.

European by birth, Pulitzer had the intelligent immigrant's sympathy for the aspirations of the American masses and from the very outset his aim was to design a newspaper which might lead the march toward a modern democracy. "For him the editorial page was the paper." In contrast with Hearst's journalism which employed sensationalism for its own sake, Pulitzer used it because he believed it to be the only means of broadening circulation and reaching the people on whose behalf he was struggling editorially. "I want," he said, "to talk to a nation, not a select committee." Nor has any other method yet been found for achieving this end. The charge has frequently been made that Pulitzer's popular crusades were motivated by a cynical appreciation of their commercial possibilities. Whatever his reasons—and the weight of evidence induces belief in their sincerity—the effect was the introduction of a journalistic formula which struck popular fancy and set the pattern from which mass dailies have never diverged. With little change it became the tabloid formula.

Simplicity was the essence of Pulitzer's technique.

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From the day in 1883 when he paid Jay Gould \$346,000 for the moribund *New York World* it was a profitable enterprise. This was no miracle of good fortune. It was the result of Pulitzer's keen sensitivity to the demands of the period, tested and proven in his earlier trials with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

America was just awakening to the economic and social realities of industrial life and needed leadership in its struggle to realize a modernized democracy. In its first issue the *World* announced that it was "dedicated to the cause of the people rather than that of the purse potentates" and forthwith began active pursuit of popular causes. Crusade followed crusade in vigorous succession and the editorial sword was constantly tilted at the breast of privilege, corruption, vice, oppression and apathy. In one year alone (1885-1886) the *World* lashed out at the bribery of New York aldermen in connection with the Broadway street car franchise, sought conviction of the builders of faulty tenements, fumed at a police sergeant charged with raping a little girl, exposed the ever-fascinating white slave traffic and campaigned for funds for the Statue of Liberty. These were all popular causes to which one could hardly take public exception and the *World* played them to the hilt. They brought applause but the paper's success cannot be laid to the virtue and energy of its editorial stand. Mass newspapers must advocate popular causes but, first of all, they must attract mass attention and this the *World* did by cease-

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less manipulation of the ancient curiosities in Love, Death, Sin, Violence and Money.

Feature material, brimful of human interest and written in the exaggerated, sentimental style of the day was the foundation of the *World's* popularity. It was poured into every news story and the headlines shouted the appeal. They cried, ALL FOR A WOMAN'S LOVE, A BRIDE BUT NOT A WIFE, DEATH RIDES THE BLAST, BAPTIZED IN BLOOD, VICTIMS OF HIS PASSION and many other arresting word combinations which now sound quaint but which were then as appealing as today's LOVE NEST MURDER.

To the melodramatic generation which tearfully warbled such paste-pearls of sentimentality as "She May Have Seen Better Days," and reveled in the lachrymose titillation of *Way Down East* the *World* gave the rich color of personality and vicarious outlet which it demanded. The newspaper became a primary source of entertainment, guided by the simple principles of human amusement. No more revealing summary of the Pulitzer technique could be found than that contained in one of his memoranda to the staff. He advised concentration "on what is original, distinctive, dramatic, romantic, thrilling, unique, curious, quaint, humorous, odd, apt to be talked about." It has been called the "Coney Island" method.

New physical forms had to be found to set off the 'new' journalism in appropriate modern garb. Fol-

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lowing Pulitzer's lead, newspapers lost their sense of restraint and abandoned themselves to any typographical stunt which promised to attract attention. Huge, eye-filling headlines became daily features and showed little regard for the story which they claimed to describe. Numerous sources have been credited with this most successful innovation and it was probably the result of several inspirations.

The most amusing attribution is made by Silas Bent who claims that the original sin was the deed of a young editor who was forced to take charge of the conservative *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* when the managing editor was marooned in his home by a fierce cyclone. In his zeal to make the most of his opportunity, the young genius ran the story of the catastrophe under a headline composed of huge wooden type. Surveying the edition in the post-storm calm, the managing editor praised the story and remarked, "It's a good head . . . but that type. I was saving that for the Second Coming!"

Whether huge streamers began with the use of this type which had been ear-marked for Jesus or whether they derive from some other source, they soon became the rule of the day along with many other format freaks, all designed primarily to magnetize the eye.

Most successful of the technical advances was the increased use of illustrations and photographs. Pulitzer used this attraction to the limit and it was to the *World's* unprecedented exploitation of pictures that

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the *Journalist* attributed its unparalleled circulation. By September of 1886 the *World* was selling 250,000 copies daily, "the largest circulation ever attained by any American newspaper" up to that time.

The yellow journalist's bag of tricks was well filled. For any situation which might arise he was prepared with the knowledge that success would surely attend him if only he made his story "Big and Bright." And if no situation arose of its own accord he had learned to create one of sufficient interest to deck out the front page. Daily journalism dropped the passivity of one who merely records and took up the more exciting task of fashioning its own raw materials. Feature matter of distinctly non-news nature was given an increasing amount of daily space and came to be the chief distinguishing factor among newspapers as the spread of wire services made the news columns increasingly uniform. The heyday of the stunt journalist arrived and lively reporters were sent scurrying in all directions searching for printable adventure. The female reporter appeared in her most memorable early form in the diminutive person of Nelly Bly to give the world a great legend and Mr. Pulitzer a front page spread by whipping her skirts around the globe in seventy-two days. The *World* greeted her return with the inspiring headline,

FATHER TIME OUTDONE

and covered its pages with rhapsodic comment on the realization of a Jules Verne fantasy.

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Joseph Pulitzer taught the daily newspaper to be a melange of fact and fancy drawing upon every source of human curiosity and playing the full stream of its excitement over an ever-increasing multitude. That the methods he employed had what are customarily known as "bad effects" upon certain sections of the populace was only natural. The same charge is applicable to every modernized technique of idea communication; the radio and the movies are also guilty of pandering to the lowest tastes and neglecting their social responsibilities. The fault lies not with the instrument but with its applications and the limitations of the audience it serves. This is not to say that yellow journalism is to be admired for its sins merely because they are common sins, but rather that the essential significance of Pulitzer's innovations lies in the fact that they represented a long stride in the democratization of the American newspaper. They gave the common man a daily newspaper suited to his tastes and dedicated to his causes.

An age which regarded its conventions with awe and accepted the middle class morality as ordained of God naturally raised a wail of protest against the sprightly new journals. Today's parent who forcibly localizes tabloid reading in the forbidden areas of the kitchen can probably remember exciting moments spent in semi-comprehending perusal of the wicked Sunday supplements with their garish colors and generous devotion to the mildly erotic. His parents banned the yellow newspaper from their respectable parlors,

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characterizing it as a new evil from which children and, indeed, the entire nation must be protected. Yet, if there is one certainty about yellow journalism it is the fact of its essential antiquity. Aside from the typographical changes produced by new machinery, the "new" journalism was hoary with age. For each of its methods a venerable precedent can be found.

Relentless emphasis upon the "human" elements in the news was the keystone of Pulitzer's technique. To interest the average mentality, his papers played up news and features in the sensationalist's explosive manner and sensationalism is as old as story telling itself. Journalistic application of this principle was made with great success by the penny papers which flourished with considerable popularity in England and America during the 1830's and '40's. After a successful start in England, the penny paper brought its bright manners to America with the founding of Benjamin H. Day's *New York Sun* in 1833.

Crime news treated humorously or sensationally was the stock in trade of the numerous papers which sprang up in imitation of the *Sun*. Their popularity proved the practical wisdom of appealing to the reader's emotions rather than his intellect. The character of these papers is best indicated by the nature of their greatest story, the Jewett murder case.

Helen Jewett, a whore, was found murdered in her room in a New York brothel in April, 1836. There was nothing violently extraordinary about the case:

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just a typical bordello killing at a time when neither bordellos nor killings were particularly rare. But whores and murder were just as fascinating then as they have always been and no tabloid could abandon itself more gleefully to sordid details than did the "quaint" penny press in exploiting this now forgotten tragedy. Court testimony was printed in full, special articles covered the conventional "angles" of the case. The *New York Transcript* considered the matter of such importance as to necessitate a special Sunday extra; this when Sunday was still the Sabbath and Sunday newspapers almost anti-Christ. So horrified was the *Boston Times* at the shameful debasement of its New York colleagues that it was moved to devote twelve of its sixteen columns to the story after an explanatory note deploring the necessity of airing such things in the press. According to the historian Bleyer, the circulation of Bennett's *Morning Herald* rose from five to fifteen thousand during the excitement.

Acting upon the truism that "pictures speak a universal language which requires no teaching to comprehend," Pulitzer ordered a great increase in the use of illustrations to brighten his pages. Nor was this anything new to journalism. As far back as 1823, the *Illustrated London News* had demonstrated the possibilities of pictures in the vitalization of news by covering the Weare murder case with five illustrations. They included such now familiar shots as "the scene of the murder" and "the pond in which the body

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was found." Aided by developments in photography and engraving, Pulitzer was able to extend the application of illustrations until they became a daily feature but the essential principle had already been long established.

For his editorial crusades Pulitzer had numerous journalistic precedents. In fact, American journalism was born in an effort to articulate viewpoints. Only recently has the newspaper become a supposedly impartial mirror of events. Pulitzer's immediate predecessors were men like Horace Greeley whose papers were all editorial crusade in devout application to the causes of an earlier day. Copying their vigor, Pulitzer attacked the problems of industrial democracy.

Pulitzer had made the old dog perform new tricks but the animal's latent capacities were still almost untouched. This new journalism had a promise of money and power such as to excite the ambitions of a Caesar and before long the would-be emperor appeared. Ruthless, wealthy, afire with personal ambition and unbound by ideals or principles, he tilted wits and pocketbooks with Pulitzer in a journalistic battle-royal. He emerged the most powerful and hated man in American journalism. Minor considerations of newspaper ethics and social responsibility were swept aside and when the struggle was over, Pulitzer's yellow journalism had become the gargoyle journalism of William Randolph Hearst.

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“O citizens and Masters of the State,
How will your reason reckon with this man?
How answer his brute question when he seeks
To brand his infamy upon this land?”

Thus begins the final stanza of a broadside discharged at Hearst in 1904 by a newspaper in San Francisco, the city of his birth and early triumphs. The question was then a decade old and it is still without an answer. Probed by a legion of biographers, magazine writers and investigators, Hearst has been attacked, denounced, exposed and damned to hell times without number. His publications have been subject to almost continual boycott since he first became a publisher in 1887. His reputation has been stripped of all honor and respect and yet for half a century his gaunt figure has dominated American journalism, his shrill voice has piped the tune for the largest newspaper audience in history. If America can be said to have had a national newspaper during these fifty years it must be judged to have been a Hearst paper. Now his sinister power is declining—the *New York American* is dead and other Hearst properties are being dispersed. Financial ill-health seems to be spreading throughout his newspaper empire. The editorial influence which could drive the nation to war in 1898 was able in 1936 only to look ridiculous in a frantic attempt to stem the Roosevelt tide. But, for half a century, success, money and power have been heaped upon the man who began where Pulitzer had the virtue to stop.

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Legend has it that the inspiration was visited upon Hearst while he was still an undergraduate at Harvard, where his talents were less appreciated than they have been since. There it was, on the banks of the gently flowing Charles, that he first thrilled with the vision of power to be drawn from the Eldorado uncovered by Pulitzer. We have a picture of the tall dudish figure, primed in the finest style of the day, studying the *World* and conceiving a burning ambition to apply its methods on his own behalf. At the same time, young Hearst received another inspiration which hastened his entrance into publishing. Showing characteristic veneration for wisdom and good taste, the future Saint of San Simeon expressed his feelings toward higher education by presenting each member of the faculty with his picture, framed in the bottom of a chamber-pot.

Nobly victorious over the academy, Hearst left Cambridge by request and advanced upon journalism. He worked a short while for Pulitzer's *World*, but it was not his intention to mount the ladder laboriously, rung by rung. In 1887 he sprang right to the top by persuading his father, the millionaire Senator George Hearst, to give him possession of the *San Francisco Examiner*. At twenty-four his career was under way.

Pumping dollars lavishly into the paper and turning it into a slavish imitation of the *World*, Hearst made what must be termed a success of his first publishing venture, at least by the criteria of circulation

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and financial returns. Lundberg asserts that prosperity came only after Hearst "sank a siphon into the city treasury," and this may have been the case, but the tabloid story is not concerned so much with Hearst's extra-curricular activities as with his more purely journalistic practices. Whether the profits came from a highly remunerative city publishing contract, from questionable relations with the public utilities over which the *Examiner* held the brutal power of publicity or from the more proper channels of advertising and circulation revenue, the essential fact was that the paper prospered enough to whet Hearst's appetite for further conquest and send him thirsting after greater gains to New York.

It is also a matter of legend that Hearst could not decide at first whether to publish the best paper in New York or the worst. Whatever doubts he may have entertained vanished with the first issue, nor is there any evidence that they have ever risen again to plague him. Little more than a facsimile of the *World*, the *Examiner* had been put over merely by copying Pulitzer's methods for San Francisco consumption. When Hearst brought out the *New York Journal* in 1896 he entered direct competition with the old master on his own grounds and he could no longer rely upon mere imitation. Now he had to strike out for himself.

Then, as always, Hearst's primary resource and major weapon was his money and the purchase of proven talent was his basic journalistic strategy. He

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determined to strike for Pulitzer's circulation and opened the battle by covering the town with blurbs and by sending pennies to registered voters "to enable them to purchase the *Journal*." The next move was a raid upon the *World's* personnel. Like today's movie magnate, Hearst was willing to pay any price for a desired man no matter how absurd. Illustration of the persuasive power behind this round-up method is given by an anecdote in Burton Rascoe's autobiography relating the winning of Walter Howey when Hearst later invaded Chicago. Howey had been getting \$8,000 a year as city editor of the *Tribune*. He can hardly be accused of undue disloyalty for switching to the *Examiner* when Hearst offered him \$35,000.

Since Pulitzer was unable, or unwilling, to compete with Hearst's millions in this fashion, it was not long before the *World's* leading figures were drinking at the new fountain. "In three months Hearst had taken Pulitzer's whole Sunday staff of editors, artists and writers." It is estimated that Hearst spent more than \$7,000,000 in the struggle while the *World* continued to show a good margin of profit.

So complete was the *Journal's* devotion to the methods of the *World* that it bothered little at first with gathering its own news. An old newspaper legend tells how the *Journal's* city desk would wait each day for the early edition of the *World* which was rushed in to the accompaniment of the little ditty :

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Sound the cymbal, beat the drum,
The *World* is here, the news has come!

But Hearst, as Pulitzer once said, was "a master of the great art of attracting attention" and the *Journal* began to gather circulation attracted by the unprecedented sensationalism which raged through its features and news columns. The paper was filled with personality items such as "news novelettes from real life," Annie Laurie's essays on such topics as "Strange Things Women Do For Love," Stephen Crane's series on the redlight district and many others forming a constant series of titillating excursions into the bizarre and the erotic. The elementary motif was defined by Arthur McEwen when he said, "What we're after is the gee-whiz emotion." Or, in the more biting words of Ambrose Bierce, "The Hearst method has all the reality of masturbation."

Nowhere did Hearst find a more fertile field for exploiting sensationalism than in the Sunday paper. Fixed upon the country during the Civil War by a demand for constant news from the front, Sunday papers developed into highly profitable circuses when Morrill Goddard and Arthur Brisbane made the Sunday *World* so sensational that it became the national Sabbath diversion. The two genii drove the *World's* Sunday circulation to 600,000 in 1896 and then decamped to the *Journal*.

The supposed reason for Brisbane's transfer is sug-

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gestive of the difference between Pulitzer and Hearst. Brisbane was bursting with ideas for typographical innovations, constantly crying for greater sensations, bigger headlines, more prominence for Brisbane (viz. the familiar front-page column). But, his style was cramped by Pulitzer's conservatism which set up annoying limits of taste and proportion. No such restrictions were enforced in the Hearst preserve and after the addition of Brisbane the *Sunday Journal* blossomed into the melange of suggestive misinformation and half truth which continues to be the characteristic American Sunday paper—plenty of paper but little news. Its features were offered in three sections—the *American Weekly*, the *Woman's Home Journalist*, filling 24 pages, and the *American Humorist* which came to be known by that profoundly inept name, the “funnies.”

A comparatively recent addition to the newspaper, these comic sections soon came to be one of the most popular features in every American paper, except for the abstemious *New York Times*. The cartoon was an ancient mode of graphic humor but had been limited largely to political subjects and satire until its technique was employed by R. F. Outcault in describing the adventures of the “Kid of Hogan's Alley,” a strip of sketches colored yellow (whence “yellow” journalism). Response to the series was so great that a myriad of imitators sprang up and the battle for the possession of Outcault was one of the major engagements of the

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Pulitzer-Hearst war. Hearst, of course, was victorious and the *Journal's* comic section began to describe itself modestly as "eight pages of iridescent polychromous effulgence that makes the rainbow look like a lead pipe." Thus was the Sunday newspaper converted to the sensational faith which became a part of the tabloid later on.

Hearst's initiative sprayed itself over every department of the paper. His most notable achievements were in the line of physical make-up. Elephantiasis attacked the *Journal's* headlines, bold-faced type smeared its pages with a rash of black, and important stories were set up so that they could be read across a fair-sized room. Sports were just beginning to become a major interest and the *Journal* opened the way for the over-emphasis of sports material which reached its height in the 1920's. The Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight was given three full pages climaxing in an account by United States Senator John Ingalls whose qualifications as a boxing expert were perhaps not so impressive as his political eminence. The regular daily sports section made its first appearance in the *Journal*.

Perhaps the most characteristic of Hearst's developments was his editorial page. Short, simply worded pieces were set up in large type. They were always easy to see, comprehensible to the most faintly literate and generally inflammatory. This and all the other Hearst methods had their influence upon the tabloid.

It is possible that yellow journalism would have

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continued on its merry way toward the tabloid even if the United States had not risen in holy crusade to free the Cubans for the ministrations of American capital. It also is likely that the Spanish-American War would not have occurred without the powerful stimulant of rabid, pro-war yellow journalism. But it is demonstrably certain that the war provided Hearst, Pulitzer and their followers with the desired excuse for exaggerating the already grotesque sensationalism into a journalistic frenzy which sacrificed everything to the cause of excitement. If the American mass newspaper ever had a chance of losing the Hearst-Pulitzer touch it was irretrievably lost in the explosion of 1898.

So successful were the wartime passions aroused in the *Journal* and the *World* that their combined circulation mounted for a while to more than 3,000,000 daily. Here was the answer to those who protested against the lies, inflammatory part-truths, violently biased reporting and low taste of the yellow press; not a logical answer but one that was unanswerable on the practical grounds which govern newspaper policies in an age of large-scale capitalization. The louder the yellow press screamed the greater waxed its popularity and the stronger its grip grew upon American journalism. Publishers can ignore truth, decency and ethics but they cannot disregard the methods which prove themselves by selling more papers.

The whole story of Hearst and "The *Journal's* War" as it was soon christened by its fond parent, is a

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tale familiar enough to have lost its sting. But it is worth recalling especially in view of the recurrence of the conditions which made it possible for the press to arouse such hysteria. Hearst's papers did nothing new during their delirium; they merely magnified their methods into more fantastic patterns. Headlines expanded even further and became still more misleading. The *Journal's* front page would be devoted frequently to such fabrications as this:

BIG BATTLE

Expected Tomorrow

Synthetic news gathering grew tremendously in the frantic attempt to get the war started. Hearst sent out adventurer-reporters of the Richard Harding Davis persuasion to get themselves involved in intrigue and to embarrass the government as completely as possible. Several of the boys were detailed to "free" attractive *Senorita Cisneros* from the Cuban dungeon. A highly imaginative account was composed exposing the insults and tortures she had received from the cruel Spaniards who stroked their mustachios devilishly and raped an innocent Cuban maiden with every meal. When Frederick Remington, the artist whose drawings were so helpful in arousing the country to a realization of the "true" state of things in Cuba, informed his master that there was no reason for remaining on the Island because no war was in the offing,

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Hearst replied in the famous words, "Please remain. You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war." In combination with Dewey's inspiring gem, this message would make a fairly complete picture of the spirit of '98.

When the war was over there was little left for the newspaper to master. Under the guidance of the yellow journalists it had learned to employ new machinery in producing a daily paper capable of attracting an apparently unlimited audience. Every technical, financial and psychological principle of modern mass journalism had been tried and proven. Only slight alterations in format and subject matter were needed for the creation of the tabloid.

PRE-TABLOIDS



NINETEENTH century experiments produced not only the basic principles of the tabloid in the preparatory stage of yellow journalism, they also evolved several periodicals so close to the tabloid in form and spirit that only the shortness of their lives and the haphazardness of their methods keep them from the main stream of tabloid history. Small in format, concise, bright in style and generally well illustrated, these pre-tabloids could be laid beside today's picture paper in family harmony marred only by superficial dissimilarities imposed by passage of time and change of manners. Aside from natural differences of language and technical methods they would combine to form a class of newspaper distinguished from others by size and style. Yet, it is not logical to include these early journals in the tabloid body proper, primarily because, with one exception they were quick failures and gave no impetus or continuity to the tabloid idea.

The one successful paper was the still familiar *Police Gazette* weekly which was almost completely a tabloid but hardly a newspaper. Since it never pretended to include a general record of news events but limited its

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contents chiefly to sports and crime, it must be classed as a magazine, or more accurately, a trade organ of Fast Life. But, it did possess many stylistic features later employed by the picture newspaper and was of such national prominence that it must be credited with a part in the evolution of the modern tabloid.

Brought out in the boisterous New York of 1845 by George Wilkes and Enoch Camp, the *Gazette* lived through its early years as a crusader against crime, gambling and vice. Its self-declared object was "to assist the operations of the Police Department" by lifting the veil from the underworld and publishing all discoverable facts about the criminals of the period. Toward the accomplishment of this worthy end the *Gazette* loaded its small columns with lurid tales of rape, seduction and murder. The stories were written in the high-flown language of the earlier novel of seduction and rarely failed to point out the moral inherent in each tragedy. The crime revelations were sufficiently intimate to earn the *Gazette* hatred and violent opposition from the police as well as the criminals. On several occasions the offices were assaulted by marauders and the editors enjoyed exciting, turbulent lives even beyond the norm for journalists in a day when the reporter's skill was measured as much by his physical attributes as by the bite of his pen.

However, it was not until the *Gazette* was taken over by Richard K. Fox in 1876 that it rose to its famed position of literary domination over barber

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shop and pool room. Although primarily a sportsman, Fox had immense resourcefulness and an energetic appreciation of the intangibles which attract attention and bring success to "lowbrow" publications. His basic idea, according to the *Gazette's* historian, Edward Van Every, was embraced in a single sentence: "If they can't read, give 'em plenty of pictures."

Assembling a skillful staff of artists and writers, Fox converted the *Gazette* from a moribund hash of dullness into a brightly illustrated, sensational weekly which threw its emphasis on the melodramatic in general and sports in particular. In 1880 he turned out a special issue for the championship prize-fight between Paddy Ryan and Joe Goss which proved so attractive that requests for copies poured in from all over the country. Almost overnight the *Gazette* became the national sportsman's journal.

Fox also took an active role in sponsoring all kinds of arresting events on behalf of the *Gazette*. Studded belts were awarded to champion pugilists and prizes were offered for contests ranging from bicycle races to drink-mixing tournaments and including a type of competition which must have involved nice problems for the judges—a hair-cutting contest. These affairs made Fox somewhat of a national figure and had salubrious effects upon the *Gazette's* circulation.

Exploiting the growing interest in the theater which was still surrounded with a seductive aura of mystery and lewdness, the *Gazette* took its readers back-stage

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and started the play-up of theatrical personalities which has been so profitable ever since. Fiction was run in serial form and columns were devoted to varied features. To balance the colorful, risqué illustrations which frequently portrayed sumptuous interiors of local public houses, the *Gazette* introduced a "religious column." It dealt, alas, with the "mistakes and misdemeanors of the clergy."

The literary style is well indicated by the following headline which capped a typical *Gazette* yarn :

SNARED BY A SCOUNDREL

An Innocent Country Beauty, On Her
Travels, Encounters Her Fate
In an Adventurer

OF THE WORST TYPE

His Easy Conquest of the Unsophisticated
Girl Through a Grand But
Diaphanous Yarn,

AND HER SUBSEQUENT SAD FATE

Although it never became much of an advertising medium, the *Gazette* profitably acquainted its readers with information on saloons, patent medicines and places where excellent "massage" could be had.

For many years the *Police Gazette* played its care-free tune to a circulation of more than 500,000 until,

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as Franklin P. Adams said, "the tabloids beat the *Police Gazette* at its own game."

Application of tabloid methods in a more strictly newspaper sense was first made by a remarkable little journal which began in 1872 to roll off the presses at 41 Park Place in New York. Diagnostically named the *Daily Graphic*, it was the first illustrated daily in America, and was constructed on a small, five-column format. In the modest style characteristic of its time the *Graphic* saluted itself as "the greatest newspaper enterprise of the day." It was not the widest read nor the most influential paper of its day but it was among the more resourceful and made several advances in newspaper technique which mark it as a significant signpost on the road to the modern mass newspaper. Mark Twain is said to have called it "a marvelous paper."

The *Graphic* was a tabloid in the full sense of the word. Printed as "An Illustrated Evening Newspaper," it prided itself on carrying "ALL THE NEWS" without bias as to fitness. Four editions were run off each day, and their small pages were bright with illustrations of all kinds. The front page, topped by a symbolic drawing of a telegraph machine, was usually turned over to a picture selected more for its sensational qualities than its news value and at times an entire story was told by illustrations alone.

A characteristic *Graphic* story was that which reported the murder of Colonel J. M. Clayton of Plum-

THE DAILY GRAPHIC

AN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY PAPER

39 & 41 PARK PLACE

VOL. XIII

All the News
Four Editions Daily

NEW YORK, MONDAY, APRIL 16, 1877

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Single Copies Five Cents

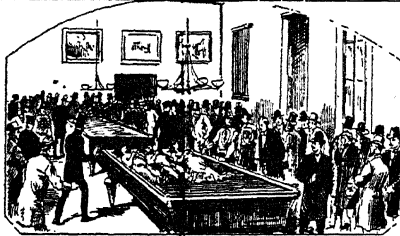
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A HIGHWIRE STUNTS MAN'S LEAP



WRESTLING BETWEEN HENRIAD AND A BEAR



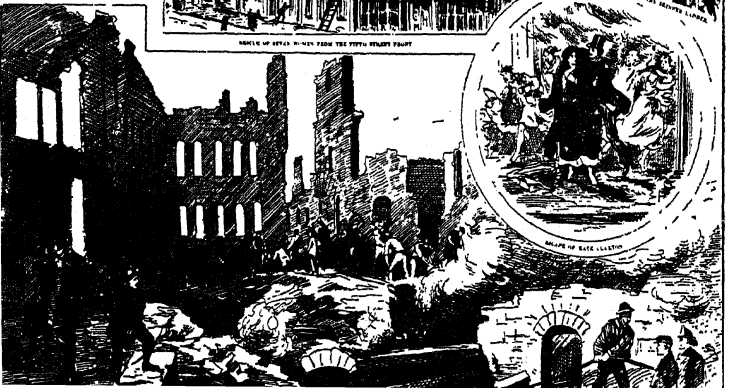
RESULTS OF YEARS OF NEW FICTIVE AT HENRIAD'S BALLROOM



WATER OF BEER WINEY FROM THE FIFTH STREET FRONT



THE NEW SCENE OF THE IMPROVED LONDON



WOMAN OF BLUE CLOTHES

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mersville, Arkansas. This great case was covered by a large illustration "showing the scene of the murder, the assassin with a smoking revolver and the Colonel staggering back from a bullet in his breast." Many of the *Graphic's* front page pictures made no pretense at connection with a news event but were merely fantasies upon some topic of current curiosity. This genre is typified by a Punch-like drawing used in March 1877, pointing out the dangers inherent in that fearful new invention of the Devil, the telephone. Under the title "Terrors of the Telephone," it portrayed "The Orator of the Future"—a distraught figure shouting into a grotesque box from which wires extended to similar boxes in Pekin, Dublin, Boston, London, the Fiji Islands and other outposts, each represented by natives in characteristic poses—the Chinese serene in the face of the harangue, the Irish smiling and obviously ready for a fight, the Puritans dignified and unconvinced, the English respectfully inattentive, and the Fiji Islanders draped about in enthusiastic nudity—a striking if unintentional prophecy of radio, but hardly the day's news in 1877.

Although it did not attempt to compete with the *Police Gazette* in bedroom matters, the *Graphic* was robustly sensational in its treatment of all other topics. The news accounts were generally brief and written with a generous amount of color. Editorially the paper took a strong stand on mildly controversial issues.

The *Graphic's* most significant contribution was

THE DAILY GRAPHIC

An Illustrated Evening Newspaper

39 & 41 PARK PLACE

Vol. XIII

All the News
Four Sentences Daily

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 1877

515 Per Year in Advance
Single Copies, Five Cents

NO. 1336



SHALL WE SLAY THE DRAGON OF CABLE MONOPOLY?

STARTS, "Secretary of State"—THE QUESTION IS MY LORD DEAR! SHALL THERE TWO GREAT LEVELS OF UTILIZATION, FORTY AND ACCQUICED LONGER IN THE OCTUBROCH REACTIONS OF THE
 S OF THE DEEP WITH H WHITES" AROUND THE ONLY WEAVERS OF TRANS ATLANTIC COMMUNICATIONS HOLD THE INTRALIGENCE OF THE CONTINENTS CLASSED IN HIS SLANT HOLD AND AS IT
 NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THE IMPROVING SPENDING OF THIS FINANCING USE WHICH I REGARD AS OF THE WHOLE BETTER ADAPTED TO THE PRACTICAL NEEDS OF THE NAUTY THAN THE AOS OF
 AS BEYONDING THE PURSUADE OF HER BLEISS' PIVELATION AND

1877 (Daily Graphic) KATE THE ARMOU... HULR UNIVERSES SHALL BE HAVENED

PRE-TABLOIDS

the introduction of a process known as "granulating photography." Used first in 1873, this primitive photo-engraving method enabled the paper to make cuts directly from photographs and, thus, to print actual pictures of news events and personalities. The results seem less than impressive by comparison with today's radio-photos and color prints, but these first news pictures represented a great advance over previous newspaper illustrations. To a generation which had yet to learn that the camera can be the author of as many lies as truths, seeing was still believing and a newspaper picture taken (allegedly) on the spot was accepted as proof of a story's accuracy. The extent to which this invention and its subsequent development vitalized and animated the news can hardly be exaggerated. Just as an accurate motion picture can convert history from dreamlike unreality to vivid experience, so can pictures fill the news with the breath of life.

Despite the bright pictures and resourceful methods which brought it a circulation of 10,000 daily, the *Graphic* managed to keep its head above red ink for only seven years. In 1879 the career of America's first tabloid came to a puzzlingly abrupt halt. Satisfactory explanation of its demise is elusive. Many newspapers seem to come and go with little reason, their fate hanging upon that most precarious and unpredictable of balances, popular fancy. Some would have us believe that for every success and for every failure in

THE DAILY GRAPHIC

AN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY PAPER

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VOL. XIV

All the News
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512 No. 100 is 40 Cents
Single Copies, Five Cents

NO. 132



OUR MODERN NAUAD SPORTING WITH THE WAVES AT LONG BRANCH II

Friend of old time a gathering
Fought of the wave and the wind
Largely warlike in a fighting

Tanked and the boat were the same to her
She rode the storm of the sea,
And the great surgy billows and merrily to her

But the Nauid today is a different
Creature as fresh as a fawn,
Her stout and her spirit is the same

The ocean she's now all the time of,
Keeps it won't last her a bit

If that is the modern and why is it
So far from the Nauid follows come

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journalism there is a visible reason but they have argued a thousand times over the death of the *New York World* and it is still an unexplained phenomenon, except on the unsatisfying ground that newspapers, like civilizations, have a limited period of vigor which is inevitably followed by decay and death. Certainly such a theory cannot be applied to a paper which dies at the age of seven years. Perhaps the *Graphic* was killed by bad finance; perhaps its five cent price was too high; perhaps it was too sensational or too new in form to gain steady patronage; perhaps it was premature. The time was not yet ripe for the tabloid.

Two more attempts were made during the closing years of the century to apply tabloid methods to American dailies. Both ended in almost immediate failure. In 1891 Colonel John A. Cockerill brought out his *New York Morning Advertiser* in a reduced format of four pages with four columns on each page, describing it as a "Paper for Busy People." Aside from its size, there was nothing distinguished about the *Advertiser* and it printed few issues.

In the same year Frank Munsey, who is better known for the newspapers he killed than those which managed to survive his editorship, bought the *New York Star*. Changing its name to the *Daily Continent*, Munsey altered it along tabloid lines. On small pages the news was boiled down to essentials so that the facts could be grasped at a glance. Great emphasis was given to features such as "Kings of Wall Street" and

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“The Noses of Fair Women.” But the paper never got a fair trial for Munsey was not a man to wait patiently while deficits mounted. In June of 1891 he laid it beside his other properties in journalism’s graveyard.

Almost thirty years passed before another daily tabloid appeared in America and then the innovation was due less to the initiative of a native journalist than the stimulation of proven success elsewhere. Although it had been fully anticipated by nineteenth century developments in American journalism, the tabloid came only after it had been virtually guaranteed by triumphs in England.

* * * *

It is said of Alfred Harmsworth that once, in an introspective mood, he arrayed himself in a hat made famous by Napoleon and remarked, without a smile, “It fits me.” His actual similarity to the Emperor may seem to end with their hat-bands, but the energetic Englishman certainly had Napoleonic ambitions. With persistence and skill he raised himself from what is sentimentally known as “humble middle-class origins” to the dignity of a baronetcy, the wealth of a Croesus and the power of England’s widest newspaper following—glories all won because he saw the possibilities of the tabloid.

In retrospect, it seems that the daily picture paper was inevitable, but if the tabloid had any one legiti-

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mate parent Alfred Harmsworth was his name. No father ever arrived at a more opportune moment.

In 1870 elementary education was made compulsory in England, creating a mass of semi-literates who could find little pleasure or relaxation in the refined, staid columns of the venerable English periodicals. Their appeal for a brighter, more diverting journal was first answered in 1881 by George Newnes with the publication of a lively little weekly called *Titbits* which soon scored a sensational success. Devoted almost entirely to feature material and human interest stories, *Titbits* was also notable as the first British paper to use contests on a large scale in its attempt to brighten life for its working class readers.

Taking his inspiration directly from *Titbits*, Harmsworth opened his career in 1883 as publisher of a magazine which he called *Answers*. It was based on the appeal of diversified interesting facts in answer to questions submitted by readers. Apparently the queries came in slowly at first so Harmsworth was compelled to exercise his ingenuity in devising a tonic for circulation. To the person who could make the most accurate estimate of the Bank of England's gold holdings he offered a pound a week for life. The contest was free of coupons, box tops, "exact facsimiles" and the other bothersome paraphernalia of today's circulation drives and the reward was so inviting that the circulation of *Answers* rose to 200,000. Within a few years Harmsworth was ready for greener fields.

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He entered big-time journalism in 1894 with the purchase of the *London Evening News*, a conservative daily which was chiefly distinguished for its efficiency in producing annual deficits. Under Harmsworth's editorship the paper made money and enabled its master to extend his domain two years later by founding the *London Daily Mail*.

The *Daily Mail* cheerfully called itself "the busy man's newspaper." Although it was of customary form and size it was actually a far cry from the conventional English paper and truly "revolutionized daily journalism" in London. Its news reports were brief and colorful in sharp contrast with the sober, long-winded accounts which deadened the columns of its rivals. Every type of modern machinery was installed to speed up production and broaden the paper's horizon. Features were introduced in great variety and the entire paper was arranged so that the hurried reader could turn immediately to his favorite corner. The price was but half a penny and the paper attracted a tremendous circulation, made huge profits and gave Harmsworth great influence.

Harmsworth's keen eye was ever quick to perceive new trends, and he hastened to take advantage of the increasing activity in the woman's world by starting a paper "written *for women by women*." This *Daily Mirror* began in 1903 but never found much prosperity. Harmsworth liked the idea of a female journal but he was hardly minded to go down struggling for

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a noble cause if it did not involve profits as well as honor. Since the women did not seem willing to pay the price, he changed their newspaper into a "half-penny illustrated"—English for tabloid.

The first modern tabloid was small, full of pictures, sensational, amusing—in no significant way different from the tabloids which later came to America. Its success was instantaneous. Circulation mounted so rapidly that within two years Harmsworth felt impelled to publish a special daily edition on the Continent for tabloid lovers away from home. By 1909 the combined editions were selling 1,000,000 copies a day and soon two imitators sprang up in London, the *Daily Sketch* and the *Daily Graphic*. The tabloid had arrived.

Harmsworth (now become Lord Northcliffe) performed many other noteworthy deeds. He fitted out an expedition to the Arctic, sponsored automobiles when they were still anathema to the peace-loving English, gave prizes and publicity to help aviation through its early trials and took a vigorous, chauvinistic part in British politics, early launching his newspapers on the crusade to slay the German dragon. But, of all his achievements none is more likely to arouse respect among American newspapermen than an effort he made in 1898 to convert American newspapers to the new faith.

As a tribute to the visitor, Pulitzer asked him to supervise the New Year's edition of the *World*. North-

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cliffe boldly elected to bring it out in tabloid style. It was an unusual event in other respects. "The entire staff honored the occasion by performing their duties in full dress"—a rare picture to anyone familiar with the customary attire of newspapermen at work.

The issue sold one hundred thousand copies in excess of the *World's* customary figure but Pulitzer was not impressed and attributed its popularity to mere curiosity. For twenty years more, the American press forgot the tabloid.

* * * *

As the new century advanced, the pace of industrial change accelerated, daily life became more complicated, cities grew more congested, and habits were further standardized. Journalism was heading for another change.

Speed was now the keynote and conciseness was an inevitable concomitant. A statistically minded student has placed his stop-watch on the pre-war John Doe and found that he "spent only from twenty minutes to half an hour in reading a newspaper." Obviously John would never be able to get to the sports section if he had to fight his way through lengthy news accounts. Accordingly, the news was condensed and arranged so that a summary of the day's happenings could be gleaned from the headlines. To secure more efficient, economical coverage, press associations were formed

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and soon a major part of the day's news was due to their collective efforts.

In competition with many new forms of amusement, the daily newspaper was forced to include greater quantities of entertaining material in the form of illustrations, features, columnists, fiction, special departments, accounts of society, intimacies of the stage, comic strips and a general play-up of the bizarre. When Americans began to take a serious interest in sports the newspaper responded by making athletics second only to major sensations as a source of copy. Sports writing became a profession by itself.

Financially, the daily paper changed in harmony with the business trends of the period. The growth of large department stores opened up a great new field of advertising and forced the newspaper to increase in size and this, in turn, made it even more dependent upon advertising revenue. Production costs soared as newsprint advanced in price and a further increase in revenue became imperative. Again, publishers searched for a means of increasing circulation.

The continued growth of the British tabloids pointed to a solution of the problem. The tabloid was cheaper to produce than a large-size paper and its colorful methods were an almost certain guarantee of large circulation. But the change from traditional ways was opposed by the inherent conservatism of American publishers and their fear of disapproval on the part of

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a public which had become accustomed to the big papers. Accordingly the American popular press attempted to increase its following by repetition of the old tricks—contests, pictures and features.

The final impetus came from Northcliffe. Impatient at what seemed to him absurd hesitancy on the part of American publishers, he told Joseph Patterson of the *Chicago Tribune*, "New York's got to have a picture tabloid. . . . If the rest of you don't see the light soon, I'll start one myself." In 1919 Patterson returned from Europe and began preparations for his "experiment."

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THE idea of starting a tabloid newspaper had probably been revolving in Patterson's mind for some time before Northcliffe supplied the necessary momentum. Nurtured in the comfort of Groton and Yale, the son of Chicago wealth had never conformed completely to the conventions of his class. Although it appears unlikely that he was ever a convinced socialist, his early books (*A Little Brother of the Rich*, *Rebellion*) revealed a sufficient sensitivity to the realities of social injustice and economic oppression to class their author as a liberal with marked reforming instincts. His progressivism has been summarized by Burton Rascoe as a "desire to reach and influence the lowest common denominator of literate American intelligence."

With his cousin Robert R. McCormick, he was publishing the *Chicago Tribune*, self-styled "Greatest Newspaper In The World" and probably one of the most profitable. The *Tribune* had a large enough circulation to assure Patterson that his voice was being heard at levels below the uppermost but he wanted to dig deeper into the masses and eventually he came to realize that this could be done only by a more elemen-

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tary type of journalism. Early in 1919 he met Northcliffe in England and his desires crystallized about the tabloid.

More than twenty years before, in his experiment with the *World*, Northcliffe had demonstrated his faith in the applicability of the tabloid to American journalism and now he was more convinced than ever that certain success awaited the publisher of an American picture paper. Popular interest in daily news had been quickened immensely by the cataclysmic wartime events and editors had been further encouraged in their natural tendency toward sensational play-up of one story each day. News pictures had assumed added importance because actual scenes from the front told much more than censors would allow to pass over the carefully guarded cables. The tempest of daily excitement had whetted the public appetite for sensations and it took no prophetic eye to see the impending moral release.

In every way the climate was strongly inviting to tabloid enterprise and Northcliffe apparently had little difficulty in persuading Patterson to take the lead. For obvious reasons, New York was selected as the experimenting ground and on his return Patterson contracted with the publishers of the *New York Evening Mail* to use their plant on City Hall Place. Since statistics showed a definite trend away from evening papers it was decided to make the tabloid a two-cent morning issue.

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It is doubtless an oversimplification to credit the start of the *Daily News* entirely to Patterson's "social-mindedness" but the other common explanations of the *News*' origins—and there are several—are unsupported by clinching evidence. The most generally printed version tells of the embarrassing quandary in which Patterson and McCormick found themselves at the end of the War. The *Tribune*'s profits had been so great that its owners were faced with the dismaying prospect of greatly increased surtaxes and they naturally cast about for another outlet. In the fall of 1918 a ten percent bonus was distributed to all employees but the golden flood was hardly skimmed. Then, so the legend runs, Patterson and McCormick decided to evade the surplus taxes in the most graceful manner—through an experiment which could be called a worthy effort toward the democratization of the daily newspaper and forgotten as soon as it ceased to be financially useful.

This is a nice little story which certainly harmonizes with the spirit of its time but it hardly deserves more than a nod. For, if this were the reason, how can one explain Patterson's zeal when the *News* became profitable within several months after the first issue? Nowhere can one perceive the slightest evidence of an attempt to make the paper other than a success. Furthermore, if this were the motive why did Patterson go to the trouble of running a paper at all? Nor is it easy to join with the starry-eyed souls who believe

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that the *News* was born in an altruistic effort to give employment to journalist heroes returning from the War. One is forced to conclude that the *Daily News* began because of Patterson's desire to sink his tentacles into the great masses as yet unclaimed by a daily newspaper. The immediate stimulation seems to have come from Northcliffe and was aided by the presence of considerable free capital.

The light had also dawned upon William Randolph Hearst and in 1919 he equipped a tabloid plant at 55 Frankfort Street in New York City but then he decided to wait and see how the *News* would be received. Hearst was still no pioneer.

On the twenty-sixth of June, 1919, while the nation's eyes were fixed upon the concluding solemnities at Versailles, the first issue of the *Illustrated Daily News* slipped upon New York's newsstands. The reception accorded America's first modern tabloid was sufficiently cool to convince Hearst that he had nothing to fear from Patterson's inspiration. His opinion was backed up by the savants of Park Row who decided almost unanimously that the funny-looking little hybrid couldn't last. Among the big-paper editors Carr Van Anda of the *New York Times* was apparently the only one to sense the promise of the picture paper. "This paper," he said, "should reach a circulation of 2,000,000."

Although the first issue of the *News* was a fairly exact duplicate of a Northcliffe tabloid it was a radical

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departure from all the American papers which lay alongside it in 1919. Its page measured approximately fifteen inches by eleven, half the size of the customary newspaper page. The contents of a page could be grasped at a glance and the whole paper could be handled with ease in the most crowded subway. On a day when other newspapers were devoted largely to such serious matters as the troubles in Ireland, labor unrest in America and the approach of Prohibition, the *News* satisfied itself by featuring two items: an account of its own beauty contest and a "new and original series of detective stories by E. Phillips Oppenheim."

Instead of the customary front-page summary of major events, the *News* covered its face with a large picture of the Prince of Wales and announced in bold type that he was expected to visit Newport in August. The back page was made up of several pictures of the local Venuses who had entered the beauty contest. Pictures and features were scattered generously on all pages. News stories were written briefly and emphasis was placed firmly upon the "personality" elements rather than on the usual inanimate details.

In the leading editorial the paper set forth its aims. The following quotations are illustrative;

WHO WE ARE

The Illustrated Daily News is going to be your newspaper. Its interests will be your interests. . . . It is not an experiment,

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for the appeal of news pictures and brief, well-told stories will be as apparent to you as it has been to millions of readers in European cities.

We shall give you every day the best and newest pictures of the interesting things that are happening in the world. . . . The story that is told by a picture can be grasped instantly. Ten thousand words of description cannot convey to you the impression you received when you look at Millet's painting, "The Angelus". . . .

No story will be continued to another page—that is to save you trouble. . . . You can read it without eye strain.

The policy of the *Illustrated Daily News* will be your policy. It will be aggressively for America and for the people of New York. . . . It will have no entangling alliance with any class whatever. . . .

Because the doings of the very fortunate are always of interest we shall print them as interestingly as possible in our society column. Because fiction will always be appealing we shall print the best and newest that is to be had. We shall print the best features that are to be found.

A simpler definition of appeal was set forth in the full page advertisement which the *News* placed in the *Times* of the same day. In striking bold-faced type it beckoned all to SEE NEW YORK'S MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRLS EVERY MORNING IN THE ILLUSTRATED DAILY NEWS.

Such was the tabloid's American debut; not an extravagantly colorful party nor graced by a lengthy receiving line, but the sprightly newcomer had good counselors and soon it began to attract a wider following. If Patterson had nourished any hopes of draining off money into an unsuccessful paper he was soon dis-

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appointed. Within six months the *News* began to turn in profits and by the summer of 1921, circulation reached 400,000, the greatest following claimed by any New York paper at the time. Since then its story is but a succession of financial and journalistic triumphs which stimulated many others to bring forth tabloid newspapers, but none has been able to approach the success of the *News*. The tabloid history is obviously unable to narrate in detail the story of every American tabloid, nor is such breadth necessary, for few features of modern urban life are more thoroughly reflective of twentieth century standardization than the tabloid press. Its various members have been almost uniformly of a single stamp, so similar in form and spirit and content that the tabloid reader is equally at home with any of them. "All the papers of this class have been brought out in an attempt to duplicate the success . . . of the New York *Daily News*" which is so completely the "arche-typal tabloid" that its story is almost the story of the American tabloid. To be sure, there have been tabloid papers which diverged from the *News* mold. They will be discussed later as variants from the major theme.

As an outline for tracing the development of the *News* it seems most convenient to take the paper at several stages of its history. For this purpose, the issues of March first, 1920, 1925, 1930 and 1935 have been selected. The date falls in varying parts of the week upon days when nothing sensationally extraordinary

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happened, thus giving a picture of the paper in normal operation. The narrative will be filled out with a running notation of outstanding events and a general panorama of the year 1926 which marked the *News's* rise to 1,000,000 circulation. This must have been a good year for newspaper editors with its happy round of thrilling, sex-laden sensations unequaled until the upturn of 1937 presented a record crop culminating in the most perfect of city-desk visions, the Gedeon triple murder, replete with Artist's Model, Love Nest and mysterious, love-crazed sculptor.

After the first issue there was a short period of experimentation but by the spring of 1920 the *News* formula had crystallized into a successful consistency. The changes were few and of such superficiality as the dropping of the word "Illustrated" from the title. Apparently Patterson decided that his paper proved the point beyond the necessity of special mention. Two editions of twenty pages each were now being printed daily and circulation had mounted to 150,000. What sort of paper was this *News* of March 1, 1920?

The character of a newspaper is like that of a person; it shows in the face. In the compendious, balanced and quiet front page of the *New York Times* we see a newspaper dedicated to completeness, impartiality and sobriety. The less architectural but more interesting front page of the *Herald Tribune* betrays a more adventurous spirit and a more candid desire to arouse interest. Typographically orgiastic and patently sensa-

THE NEWS

No. 2117. Copyright, 1928, by Newsday, Inc. Printed as an extra matter for Office New York, N. Y. New York, Monday, March 1, 1928. 28 Pages. Daily Except Sunday. 2 Cent

McADOO ON 'THE HANDBOOK'

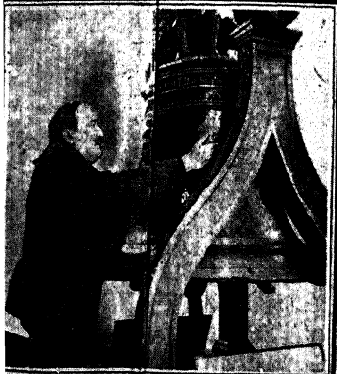
PAGE



CHIEF OF BUREAU... (NEWS photo)



General Perkins Delivering His Address... Mrs. Elizabeth Marbury at left.



IRISH-AMERICAN IDEALS, ETC.—The Irish of the Atlantic people are... (NEWS photo)



Dorchester Collie and Mrs. W. R. Heron.

AN APPEAL FOR LOYALTY AND PATRIOTISM was made by Gen. John J. Pershing and Dorchester Collie, newly appointed Secretary of State, at a meeting in City Hall to mark the close of "Loyalty Week." The gathering was under the auspices of the Mayor's Committee of Women for Reconstruction and Relief. Mrs. W. R. Heron, acting chairman, introduced Mrs. Elizabeth Marbury, woman delegate at large to the Democratic national convention, and Mrs. Marbury, after a valiant defense of Mayor McAdoo's administration, introduced Mr. Collie. The latter made a plea for popular support of public servants, which his hearers interpreted as a call for President Wilson. General Pershing...

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tional, the front page of a typical Hearst paper provides an accurate index to its rabble-rousing, partisan contents.

Nothing about the tabloid is more distinctive and characteristic than its front page. A newspaper style aimed candidly at the masses, the tabloid uses on its front page the two devices which have proven most successful in arousing popular attention—a single headline to catch the eye and pictures to hold it. The front page reproduced on the opposite page is a good example of the early tabloid manner.† As yet, the tabloid was little more than a small, pictorialized version of the conventional newspaper. The pictures on its front page (General Pershing, Blasco Ibanez, Bainbridge Colby, Mrs. W. R. Hearst) did not offer a detailed summary of the day's news, but they represented stories of serious interest told by pictures which might have appeared in any paper of the same date.

Page two is solid with copy, not a single picture. The first column is devoted to explanations of the front-page headline and informs us that McAdoo is not William Gibbs McAdoo of California but Chief New York City Magistrate William McAdoo and the handbook, whose perils he has assailed, is a devil to permit horse-race betting outside the tracks. Below this story there is a two-inch column labeled "Washington News" which carries two short items, one on the possibilities of beer legislation and another on female suffrage. In the next column is a long piece by Frazier

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Hunt on "War Clouds In Far East; China Korea and Russia Threaten Japan." It is a serious discussion of the problems facing Japan's white armies now that the Soviet has solidified itself against invasion. Other stories on this page are of similarly serious nature and deal with Senator Lodge's crusade against the League of Nations, labor troubles and the return of American railroads to private ownership.

Page three is more in the legendary tabloid manner. It is brightened by five pictures and its stories are of more immediate interest. Column one is devoted to a piece about a heart-balm case. The second column tells how MONKEY GLANDS GIVE MAN OF 72 YOUTH'S HEALTH. Rev. T. G. Northrup, founder of the "Church of Silent Demand" is shown "Demonstrating cure of physical ills by Faith."

On the fourth page there is only one story but its opening sentence gives an indication of the tabloid's literary style at this period. New Jersey's debate over a 3.5 percent beer bill is the topic and the first sentence reads: "There appears to be every likelihood that we are about to have something in the nature of a whiskey rebellion . . . Yes Sirree!" With this lively piece we have come to the virtual end of the day's news; henceforth the tabloid is given over almost exclusively to pictures, features, contests, advertisements and miscellany.

A limerick contest dominates page five. Today's

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winner is somewhat of a contribution to Shakespearian criticism :

If Hamlet a ouija board had
He wouldn't have been half so sad
 He'd have taken the thing
 And conversed with the King
BUT HE DIDN'T; THAT'S WHY HE WAS MAD.

With the exception of three small robbery stories and two pictures, the sixth page is given entirely to advertising. The pictures include a portrait of a young French girl who has come to the United States "To Marry The American Soldier She Met In Her Own Country" and a picture of Jack Dempsey who is about to face an indictment for conspiracy to escape Federal service. Most of the seventh and eighth pages are covered with advertisements and a map showing the "Revolt In Honduras".

Page nine carries the day's sole editorial: MAKE WOMEN VOTERS WELCOME. It counsels a fair break for the ladies and concludes with the words: "Women are in politics to stay and they might as well be intrusted with all of the duties of politics from the beginning." At the head of the editorial column is the paper's talisman—a quotation from Stephen Decatur: "In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be right; but our country right or wrong." The other columns on this page are filled with fea-

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tures. There is the "Peoples' Voice"—a collection of short letters on varied topics including several boosting the *News*. Next to this Dr. W. A. Evans writes daily on "How to Keep Well" and the last column is called "A Line O'Type Or Two." It is subheaded "what fools these mortals be" and presents a number of heterogeneous items such as a note about a sensational newspaper conducted by a man named Daley Fitts.

A double spread of pictures covers the two middle pages with varied subjects including Princess Xenia de Waldeck of Paris, several society people playing ball in Palm Beach, the aviator Schroeder taking off for an altitude hop and "Michigan's Rum War". At the bottom of the page is "Gasoline Alley", a comic strip.

Page twelve, the theater page, offers a review of "Mary's Ankle", a motion picture with Doris May and Douglas McLean. The review is decorated with a picture of Doris's now forgotten charms. "News About Movies", "Drama Notes" and a daily column of pieces relating "My Nearest Approach To Death" fill the remaining parts of the page. There are also several ads which remind us that this was the year of Jane Cowl's "Smilin' Through", "Lightnin' ", Ethel Barrymore's exciting "Déclassé" and the popular hit "Irene". Most notable among the cinema attractions is Elsie Ferguson's memorable "Sacred and Profane Love".

Little features are the substance of page thirteen and their character is suggested by the little line which runs across the middle of the page, quoting from

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Thackeray, "A good mother is the loveliest flower that blooms under heaven." In support of this contention, the *News* contributes columns on "Good Cooking," "Fashion's Blue Book," "Most Embarrassing Moments," "Bright Sayings of Children" and "Beauty Answers."

Sportsmen's corner is on page fourteen which is devoted to developments in the spring training camps of the major league baseball teams. There is a chapter from a serialized account of the Dempsey-"Fireman" Flynn fight written by an "eye-witness". At the bottom of the page, "Harold Teen" continues his perennial struggle with his sweetheart "Lillums". Page fifteen is given in its entirety to a short story by George Agnew Chamberlain. Entitled "The Spoon The Pig Bit", it is a light romance adequately diagnosed by the sub-title: "The Big Fellow Starts To Tell His Pirate Story To The Boy But Finishes It For Her, And Her Alone." The remaining five pages are taken up with classified ads, pictures and a single comic strip.

After glancing at the pictures on page twenty we find that it has taken less than half an hour to read the *News* with a thoroughness which would have kept us with the *Times* for more than an hour. Herein lies one of the tabloid's soundest principles. The average city-dwelling American is a person of great curiosity who hates to feel that he has missed anything; yet his time for the daily paper is almost always limited to a few minutes. On Sundays he has hours for the paper

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and we shall see later how the tabloid alters its character to fit this demand. But on weekdays, reading time is confined to fifteen or twenty minutes and within this short period the average reader feels compelled to master all the news of the day. He is therefore pleased with a newspaper which he can really finish and the tabloid gives him a sensation which he prizes perhaps above all others; it makes him feel fully informed, abreast of the times. Its small stereotyped pages offer the easiest possible reading and he leaves the tabloid with the feeling of a task completed, instead of the sense of confusion and mild frustration left by a hurried race through a wordy, large-size paper.

Another approach to the character of this issue of the *Daily News* is obtained by actual measurement of its contents. The whole paper has a total of 1120 column inches available for copy and 413 of these are taken up by advertisements. Pictures occupy 204 inches, features fill 196 inches, news takes 225 inches and editorials command a bare 14 inches. The remaining space is filled with the miscellaneous stuff known as "filler"—ads for the benefit of the *News*, jokes, and so forth. Of the 225 inches given to news, 15 are devoted to crime news, 30 to sex news, 37 to sporting matter and the preponderant 143 inches to regular non-sensational news.

These figures mean that the *News* consisted, roughly of one-third advertising, one-fifth pictures, one-fifth

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news, and one-fifth features. By comparison with large-size papers the proportions are not nearly so striking as might be expected. Except for the unusual amount of picture and feature space and the small editorial content they would serve to describe almost any paper of the date. But before generalizing about the issue it is interesting to look at the *New York Times* of the same day to see what the *News* reader missed and why he preferred the tabloid to the big papers.

A salient point of difference strikes the eye immediately; in its entire twenty-eight pages the *New York Times* has not a single picture. Some of the advertisements are accompanied by illustrations but the regular columns are barren of all but copy. Comparing this with the frequently illustrated *Times* of today we get much the same impression of heaviness which the *News* reader of 1920 must have received from that year's *Times*. This feeling is further heightened when we note that the total feature content of the *Times* is included in less than half a column of comment on the movies, two inches of Alexander Woollcott on the Little Theater's production of playlets from Poe's writings and the faintly humorous "Topics of the Times" column. Of the eight front page stories in the *Times* only one received prominent mention in the *News*. There are long columns about Italy's blockade of Fiume, the grave situation in Syria, the League of Nations embroglio in the U.S. Senate, the return of

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the railroads to private ownership (this is the one that was also featured in the *News*). The inside pages are heavy with copy and well-filled with advertisements, editorials and comment on matters here and abroad.

The *News* readers, thus, have missed detailed information about the day's major happenings. But each of the important stories has been brought to his attention with a few lines and, as soon as a true crisis has arrived, the situation will appear in the *News* featured upon page one and covered adequately if briefly; provided, of course, that it doesn't happen on the same day as a good Love Nest Murder. In return for the absence of extensive coverage the *News* reader has received a number of diverting features, several interesting, colorful pictures, a brief summary of the day's news; in sum, a less enlightening but much livelier paper with a sufficient amount of serious material to justify the conclusion that the balance is not all on the debit side.

As yet the tabloid was sensational only in technique. Its contents differed from those of other papers primarily in brevity of treatment and over-devotion to non-news material. The subjects covered were almost all within the recognized scope of daily journalism. The general tone was moderate, the writing capable, simple and quite free of purple. Undeniably, some distortion of perspective was occasioned among *News* readers by the extravagant emphasis on one story but this keystone of the tabloid technique was based on the reason-

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able assumption that the average mind is incapable of becoming deeply interested in more than one thing at a time. For the mass newspaper "a time" is at least one day, and frequently longer. A glance at any of today's big papers will show how this technique has spread through all forms of daily journalism.

As the public became anesthetized by the wave of "ballyhoo" which swept America in the twenties all newspapers were forced to deal out the news in more striking colors and to call upon the sensational technique which the tabloid first exploited to the limit. Later we shall see the big papers adopting other tabloid features and thus signifying that they have been approved by the "masses and classes" alike. Pictures, fiction, columns of gossip, advice and consolation all proved their validity by becoming popular parts of all American dailies. In 1920 they were to be found almost exclusively in the tabloid and that is probably why people flocked to the *Daily News*.

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DURING the summer of 1921 the circulation of the *News* rose over the 400,000 mark. In a little over two years, it had amassed a following surpassed by only one other paper in New York City, Mr. Hearst's thirty-year-old *Evening Journal*. The sources of this group will be examined later but it must already be evident that it seemed to come in large measure from the classes dearest to Hearst's democratic heart and the danger was soon felt in the Imperial Sanctum. Never had Hearst been beaten in his efforts to reach deeper into the masses but when the *News* announced a circulation of 400,000 it became dramatically clear that he was faced by a most powerful competitor. He determined to beat it into submission with a dose of its own medicine. The *American* was filled with pictures and features but still the *News* gained. The next measure came with the inclusion of a daily tabloid section in the *American* but this also left the *News* unaffected. Hearst squared off for a knockdown battle.

In Chicago his *Herald-Examiner* had been fighting the *Tribune* with a lottery feature entitled "Lady Luck" and in the spring of 1922 Hearst brought it to

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New York. The *American* announced a lottery with a grand prize of \$1,000 and several smaller awards. Next day the *News* picked up the challenge and proclaimed that it too was running a lottery but with a real prize—\$2,500 backed up by numerous incidental prizes totaling several thousand dollars. When the *American* raised the ante to \$5,000 the *News* immediately went to \$10,000.

Contemporary reports indicate that the affair was setting a considerable portion of New York's population on its ear. Contests have always exerted a particularly strong fascination upon Americans and this was an ideally simple contest with a pleasant touch of physical combat. Each day the papers printed lucky numbers and sent out trucks loaded with coupons. These were distributed to frenzied mobs at several central points such as the Battery, Grant's Tomb, Times Square and Columbus Circle. Prizes were awarded to those lucky (or strong) ones who secured numbers corresponding to those in the paper. "Lady Luck" so absorbed the staffs of both papers that news accounts were reduced to the minimum and the offices were in a state of excitement bordering on demoralization. By the end of the week, the *American* was selling 200,000 above its normal circulation but the *News* had added 300,000 to its following. When the *News* declared a prize of \$15,000 the *American* went to \$20,000 and circulation climbed another peg.

Victor Watson, who was conducting the contest for

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Hearst, is said to have collapsed when the next day's issue of the *News* was brought to him. The *News* had raised the award to \$25,000 and announced coldly that it would double any further increase offered by its rival. The limit had been reached. Despite tremendous increases in circulation the affair was proving too expensive and both Patterson and Hearst were anxious to call it off. After a bit of hedging, they arranged a face-saving finis by engaging the services of the late Senator Medill McCormick, Patterson's cousin. He was easily able to persuade Postmaster Will Hays, ever an eager guardian of the national virtue, that the contest violated mail regulations against gambling and the government called a halt.

In the ensuing few days both papers lost most of the circulation gained during the fracas but the affair was not without significant effects. For the first time, Hearst had met his master, not so much in Patterson as in the tabloid and he was forcibly disabused of his prejudice against the picture paper. After experimenting with the *Advertiser* in Boston he entered the New York tabloid field in 1924 with the *Daily Mirror*. In triumphing over Hearst the *News* notified the world that the tabloid was a fixture of increasing importance in American journalism.

Following the *News* down through the years from 1920, one has constantly to resist the temptation to pause upon a picture, a headline, a story. On almost each of the yellowing pages there is a memory which

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beckons us to pause. In these pictures and in the timely idiom which surrounds them there is vividly imprisoned the story of our "only yesterday"; not in the vaguely suggestive manner of a reporter's words but in the graphic eloquence of the camera. And, when the tabloid speaks, its language is not dead with the stylism of conventional newspaper wordage but alive with phrases that were spoken. Here is the history of a time as it would have been written by its people.

Through the years of Harding "normalcy" when American enterprise was reveling in the joy of ever greater gains, the *Daily News* expanded its circulation with every issue and when we put a finger upon the line as it crosses March 1925 it stands at 800,000, greatest in the United States. In the meantime two more tabloids had appeared in New York, both arriving in 1924. Mr. Hearst had finally brought out his *Daily Mirror* in June and Bernarr Macfadden had added his robust spirit to the field with that tabloid of tabloids, the *Evening Graphic* which appeared in September. But the *News* seemed only to thrive on competition. All the morning papers except Hearst's *American* were enjoying happy days but none could hold a candle to the progress of the *Daily News*. It was now filling 32 pages with the average daily issue and since 1921 had been printing a Sunday paper which was soon to have a circulation exceeded only by that of the fabulous *American Weekly* of the Hearst chain. Five editions of the *News* were run off each day and

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since the first, or "Pink" edition appears on the streets early in the evening the *News* has become an all-day paper. Because March 1, 1925, fell upon a Sunday we must turn to the issue of March second for comparison with the 1920 copy.

Although the physical complexion is unaltered, a change in character can be noted upon the first page. At the top of the page where the *Times* runs its "All The News That's Fit To Print" the *News* is now basing its appeal on the "Best Fiction In New York". Gone is the attempt to deal with serious matters of the day and in its place there is a wholehearted devotion to pictures of women in their most universally interesting occupations. The featured story is told by a large picture of its heroine, Janet Behrens. She appears with her child upon her lap posed to elicit the sympathy of all who cherish the sanctity of American womanhood. The headline informs that she is ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THE VERDICT OF THE JURY IN HER \$50,000 HEART BALM SUIT. Beside her, happily unaware of the clash in moral values, is Norah Bayes who TAKES FIFTH MARITAL LEAP. That is all of page one.

Page two is dominated by a streamer reading: FIREMAN STABBED TO DEATH and the story takes most of the first column. The copy on this page includes four other stories. In column two there is an account of a contract drawn up between the actor Joseph Schildkraut and his wife in which they agree

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never to act together again. The third column is devoted to Norah Bayes's fifth trip to the altar and column four carries a piece about a woman who was arrested for passing a bad check. The final column is filled with the Behrens LOVE SUIT.

A streamer headline also runs across page three. It reads QUAKE STIRS UP STORY CROP and the entire page is filled with anecdotes inspired by the mild earthquake felt along the Atlantic seaboard the previous day. The same story also claims page four under the streamer: QUAKE SHAKES CLASSIC MUSIC INTO JAZZ and the subhead says IT ALSO FLIPS POWDER FROM FEMININE NOSE. From this page to the middle picture section, most of the space is taken up by advertising to the almost complete exclusion of other matters. Features begin on page twelve with an example of the crossword puzzle craze that was sweeping the country.

On page fourteen Doris Blake has one of her daily columns of personal advice. Under the headline RIGHTS IN THE HOME AREN'T ALWAYS RIGHT, she "Continues Today This Series Of Articles Informing Young Women Readers Of The *Daily News* On How To Avoid The Pitfalls Of Youth And Reap A Happy Married Life." This page also has Dr. Evans' column on "How To Keep Well," "The Gumps" comic strip, "Embarrassing Moments" and a newcomer, a column called "A Friend In Need" which seeks to help those in dire distress of any kind.

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Page 15 offers three short editorials: HELP GET A HUDSON BRIDGE, FISH LIFE SAVING and LIVING DOWN A PAST. The last is an excellent example of the *News*' syncopated editorial style. Here it is in full:

Is it possible for a woman to live down a past? Sure thing. They now want to put Diana along with Civic Virtue in Mayor Hylan's front yard.

The *News* now has an editorial program which is set forth at the top of the page:

1. A seat for every child in the public schools.
2. Five-cent fare and better service [*on the subway*].
3. Improved traffic conditions.
4. A bridge across the Hudson.
5. Stricter regulation of the sale of pistols.
6. More parks for the people.

A comfortable set of proposals chiefly distinguished for their success in taking a stand on no truly controversial issues.

! Also on the editorial page is a feature column which has become so popular that it is common to almost every tabloid. In the *News* it is called the "Inquiring Photographer" and is designed to allow *News* readers that height of thrills, their own pictures in the paper. Each day a reporter and a photographer set forth to ask the opinion of half a dozen citizens on some question of current interest. Today the issue is "War Debts" and the column contains six pictures of citizens

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accompanied by their comments. Although the selection seems casual at first, it is soon noted that there is a careful inclusion of the major lower-middle class occupations—stenographers, clerks, housewives, mechanics and salespeople. The page is completed with another daily feature of similar type, the “Voice of the People”, a column of letters to the editor containing several enthusiastic boosts for the *News*.

The pages following the middle spread of pictures are devoted almost entirely to features. There are two bits of fiction: a serial entitled “Burned Evidence” which reveals the most intimate secrets of high society and a “Daily Story From Real Life”. This latter has become a fiction requirement for the tabloid since its popularity was established by the success of Macfadden’s *True Story* magazine. Pages are given to the customary pieces on beauty advice, cooking suggestions, problems of the lovelorn, “Bright Sayings”, etiquette and comic strips. The theater section has been expanded to two pages and there are now two first string critics, Burns Mantle for the stage and Mildred Spain for the movies. Sport news fills four entire pages and the back page is taken up with pictures of athletes. As yet there is no gossip writer but the peeping Toms are foreshadowed by a collection of “All The Gossip Fit To Print Of The New York Stage.”

Space figures for this issue are shown by the following table:

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Total space available.....	2320	column inches
Total amount devoted to all		
kinds of news		452.5
Crime news	45.5	
Sex news	51.5	
Sport news	206.5	
Straight news	149.0	
Pictures		276.5
Features		345.0
Advertisements		856.0
Editorial		29.0
Filler		361.0

Comparison of these figures with those for the 1920 issue shows that the total available space has doubled and, in almost exact proportion, so has the amount devoted to all kinds of news, sex news, editorials and advertisements. The space given to crime news has trebled; straight news has suffered a relative decrease of one-half and pictures have increased by one-half. The most remarkable change is the rise of sport news from 37 inches in 1920 to over 200 in 1925.

In no sense were these trends peculiar to the tabloid. All papers had increased in size. Advertising had grown tremendously. Sport news was claiming a constantly increasing amount of space in every paper in response to the nation-wide emphasis on athletic activity and spectatorship which embraced every competitive sport from football to chess. Quantitatively, the tabloid had changed only as the nation had changed.

Of the stories featured by the *Daily News* only two

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appeared on the front page of the *Times* of the same day. Norah Bayes's achievement in capturing number five was too great to escape notice. The earthquake story also got front-page mention. Other stories on the *Times* front page were concerned with the death of Ebert, former President of Germany, a new peace offer from Germany, the approaching inauguration of Coolidge and Dawes, the bombing of a Prohibition agent, and Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick's farewell sermon. Pictures and features were still almost totally absent from the *Times* but some of the news stories show that the big paper was not wholly insensitive to the changes noted in the tabloid. On the front page there was a small story under the heading:

Sister Helps English Vicar Finish Suicide;
Fires Shot to End Pain, Is Adjudged Insane.

Also on the front page was the following colorfully captioned item:

Locomotive Blows Up; One Killed Two Dying;
Boiler and Cab Sent Flying Into a Field.

Three entire pages were given over to sports and the total amount of sport copy exceeded that in the *News*. A single picture appeared in the news section—a shot of Coolidge in a characteristically sour pose. The *Times* was still untainted by the life of the common man but signs of a change were beginning to

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appear. For a complete picture of the changing tabloid we must turn to the *Sunday News* of March 1, 1925.

Over a million copies of this paper were sold in five editions averaging 80 pages each. An edition consisted of a news section, a feature section and eight pages of comics in colors. The actual amount of news was almost negligible; even the so-called news section was almost purely features.

The first edition, bound in a pink cover, featured a story with the headline SHE DANCES INTO MILLIONS. It told the remarkable success story of Leonora Hughes whose career started in Greenpoint, Long Island where she was a telephone operator. Her charms soon attracted the attention of Bud Fisher, the cartoonist, and after he had exhibited her in the proper night clubs she became the dancing partner of the renowned Maurice. And now she was marrying a romantic millionaire from Argentina.

The second edition, titled HOME edition, featured a tale of LOVE'S DEATH VOW and the streamer for the third edition proclaimed BANJO SHEIK WINS LOIS WILDE. The fourth and fifth editions were titled EXTRA and FINAL and both gave their front pages to the earthquake story. Although the tremor was felt only slightly in New York it was the big story of the day in all the local papers but none treated it with the imaginative excitement shown in the accompanying picture of the *News* front page.

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TION

SUNDAY NEWS

Published by News-News, Inc., 125 W. 47th St., New York 20, N. Y.

NEW YORK'S



PICTURE NEWSPAPER

Published on Sunday, March 1, 1936. Price 5 Cents. Entered as Second-Class Matter, March 1, 1935. Post Office at New York, N. Y., under No. 107.

5 CENTS
PER COPY

10 Cts.

No Pages including 2 cent surcharge

New York, Sunday, March 1, 1936.

Published Each Sunday, 5 Cents

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JAKE SHAKES CITY

Story on Page 2



...and ... In July, 1931, Prof. David Todd of ...
...has ... of ...
...has ... of ...
...has ... of ...
...has ... of ...

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After page three the paper abandoned itself to features. Two pages were needed to tell the success story of "Roxy", the dynamic impresario of movie palaces whose life-epic, in the words of the *News*, "Reads Like That of Alger Hero." Illustrations for the biography consisted entirely of pictures of the "women in his life". A regular Sunday feature titled "What Has Happened To Justice?" also claimed two well-illustrated pages with a chapter in its series of retold crimes. This installment recounted the acquittal of a postmistress charged with murder and its first paragraph is interesting :

Lena Clarke is one of the few murderesses of history who have worn cotton stockings. It did not seem to have any effect upon the verdict.

The feature section included several curious items whose character is indicated by the headline TELLEGEN'S WIFE DILATES ON BABY. In the middle of this section were two lush pages filled with pictures of movie heroines and throughout were scattered amplified Sabbath installments of the regular daily features. Eight pages of sport news completed the section. Sunday comics in colors made up eight pages of the third section with full page chapters of the customary items—"The Gumps", "Harold Teen", "Little Orphan Annie", "Moon Mullins", "Smitty", "Gasoline Alley", etc.

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To one who is unfamiliar with American Sunday papers this probably seems a grotesque travesty upon the very idea of the newspaper. But, the *Sunday News* was well within the accepted tradition started by Pulitzer forty years before and it differed only in degree from the other Sunday papers of 1925. Even the sedate *Times* had learned to turn itself into a heterogeneous melange of special departments, features, pictures and diversions on the Sabbath. The *News* was distinguished primarily by its candid relaxation into the tastes of the masses.

In March of 1926 the six-year-old *Daily News* entered journalism's promised land with the attainment of a circulation of 1,000,000 and there it has remained ever since. For this, and for other reasons, the year 1926 makes a good period for insight into the character and ways of the *News*. In many ways, the tabloid is an expression of America's post-war moods and no year of the decade was more emphatically "post-war" than 1926. Almost everything that characterized the period between the War and the depression can be found symbolized in the events of 1926 many of which were so peculiarly products of the epoch that it is doubtful whether they would have achieved front page notice at any other time. A résumé of the stories featured by the *News* in 1926 affords adequate materials for the dissection of the era, and, what is more important for our purposes, gives a pic-

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ture of tabloid in action under ideal circumstances. As an overture, the orchestra plays the current song hits "Dinah", "Brown Eyes Why Are You Blue", and "I'm Just Wild About Animal Crackers".

Early in January the law finally caught up with Richard Reese Whittemore, known and admired by a vast American public as "The Candy Kid". Whittemore, whom the press had already converted into a colorful gangster hero, faced definite charges on six murders and was credited with several other heroic deeds. Shortly after "The Candy Kid" was brought to the bar, the police captured Gerald Chapman and for days the front page of the *Daily News* was torn between two loves. Just as these stories were beginning to lose luster, Earl Carroll, noted producer of musical extravaganzas, came to the rescue with the party of the decade. The word "orgy" was well loved in the city room but previous to Mr. Carroll's famous party there had been nothing really worthy of the name.

During the course of a lavish spread for his Broadway friends, Mr. Carroll achieved his masterpiece by having Joyce Hawley, one of his chorus ladies, appear in a bathtub filled with sparkling champagne. The guests then proceeded to consume the wine and Miss Hawley was left at her best. This outcome, she later explained, was more than she had bargained for and Mr. Carroll was brought up on what are politely known as "charges." Gleefully, the *News* plastered

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itself with inspired headlines, heavily adjectived accounts of the orgy and pictures of the prominent participants.

When this item had been wrung dry the *News* turned to the romance of the decade, l'Affaire Peaches. For several years, Edward Browning, a wealthy real estate operator, had been a reliable source of copy with his penchant for publicity and young girls. Now he had offered to share his gold with a plump, baby-faced, fifteen-year-old shopgirl known to a thrilled public as "Peaches." "Daddy's" marriage with "Peaches" was perfect tabloid stuff and while the *News* went into ecstasy the public throbbed happily with the realization of a dream.

Before spring had run into summer, another bedroom sensation mounted the front page. Kip Rhineland, wealthy member of an old New York clan, had married an attractive girl of striking dark complexion. Several months later, Kip said, he was amazed to discover that his bride had a sound racial reason for her complexion and he sued her for divorce claiming that she had misrepresented herself as a Caucasian. The outraged lady contested on the grounds that Kip must have known it all along. The town was torn by the exciting question of how much a husband can reasonably be expected to know. Although the story was filled with potential dynamite on the racial question, the *News* neatly sidestepped the central issue carrying along with daily accounts of the thrilling

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happenings in court. When the trial reached its climax as Mrs. Rhinelanders stripped before the judge to demonstrate the validity of her contention, the *News* was unable to rise to the heights with a picture such as the *Graphic* printed, but the event was described to a crisp.

In July the biggest crime story of the decade broke. Attempting to stimulate circulation, the staff of Hearst's tabloid *Daily Mirror* hit upon a murder case which had been forgotten for almost four years. On September 14, 1922 in New Brunswick, New Jersey, the bodies of Reverend Edward Hall and his choir-singing sweetheart, Eleanor Mills, had been found in what appeared to be a successful suicide pact. The matter was investigated by a coroner's inquest but nothing was found which cast enough suspicion to justify a trial and the case was closed. By producing some "new evidence", the *Mirror's* agents succeeded in having Hall's widow, Mrs. Frances Stevens Hall, arrested on July 28, 1926 and the sordid mess was dragged into court. In retrospect one can hardly fail to be surprised that this run-of-the-mill murder story was able to arouse such tremendous interest but the story was picked up by every important paper in the country and for months the eyes of the press were focused on the little court in New Brunswick.

For the *Daily News* it was the story of the year as far as total amount of copy is concerned. On July 29, 1926 the *News* broke the story with a resume of the case accompanied by two pages of pictures showing

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the locale and the principals. The next day the story took up the entirety of the first four pages and page six carried a map of the murder region. Until August seventh the Hall-Mills case was featured daily upon the front page and it stopped then only because a butcher's daughter had catapulted herself to fame by swimming the English Channel. Gertrude Ederle was fine news but she couldn't compete with the lurid details of the New Brunswick trial and on August eighth the *News* reverted to Hall-Mills matters. There it remained until August twentieth when it gave way to rhapsodic comment on the Irving Berlin-Ellen Mackay nuptials, the union of "Tin-Pan Alley and Park Avenue."

Then came a story which topped all. It held the spotlight for only three days but during this time the *News* was almost a one-story paper. And well it might be, for America's heartbeat had paused. Early on the morning of August 24th Rudolph Valentino died.

Not content with the inherent richness of the story, the *News* attempted to magnify the colossal with the suggestive front page headline :

VALENTINO POISONED (Broadway Hears)
(Doctors Deny.)

The second page was headed with :

VALENTINO DIES WITH SMILE
AS LIPS TOUCH PRIEST'S CRUCIFIX

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and the next six pages were filled with accounts of the "Sheik's" romantic life and untimely death. His life story was entitled RUDY LEAPED FROM RAGS TO WORLD HERO. The day's sole editorial was a sentimental tribute ending with the words, "A typically American Romance ends with the career of Rudolph Valentino."

For the next day's issue the art department created a front-page masterpiece which lacked only a halo to make it a perfect Pieta. Valentino was pictured at length upon his richly flowered bier while a young lady kneeled at his feet praying the lament that was in a million hearts. Page two presented a story by Norma Talmadge entitled VALENTINO AS I KNEW HIM and the screen star had known him well. There was still enough copy left in the story to fill the first three pages of the August 26th edition.

While a frenzied mob of 10,000 worshipers were storming the black-draped doors of Campbell's funeral parlor for a last look at the Supreme Lover, a small part of the nation was quietly mourning the death of Charles Eliot, most famous of Harvard presidents and the country's outstanding academic figure who had died the same day as Valentino. Much has been made of the tabloid's apathy toward the passing of an immortal while it was stirring hysteria over a screen hero. Here, they say, here you have the tabloid in a nutshell. A great man dies and, almost regretfully, the *News* accords him an obscure paragraph hidden behind

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mountains of tear-stained drivel about a shadowy idol of kitchen maids and shopgirls who will soon find another object for their pathetic adoration. This, they moan, is a gauge of the appalling depths to which the American newspaper has sunk.

This charge cannot be answered on its own grounds for it proceeds from an attitude wholly incompatible with any understanding of the tabloid or the stage of American civilization which is reflected in the tabloid. It proceeds from the same kid-gloved reformism that would eliminate crime and disease without attacking poverty. Whether Charles Eliot was a superior being to Rudolph Valentino is beside the point. Neither the tabloid nor any other newspaper is empowered to make independent evaluations of importance. Newspaper values proceed from and are defined by the values of the society they serve. What is vital to that society *must* be vital to its journals and it has been demonstrated time and again that newspapers "mold" public opinion only to a highly restricted degree. They are, rather—as they must be—mirrors of attitudes previously developed by their readers. The student of political history has long recognized that theory is always preceded by fact; political systems are realities before they become philosophies. Just so, it must be appreciated that newspaper manners are evoked by society rather than imposed by editors.

Although this may be somewhat more obviously true of the mass newspapers than of the more exclusive

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dailies, it is fundamental to all papers however elevated their tone. No single journal can reflect the tastes of society in its entirety but each individual paper inevitably harmonizes with the spirit of its stratum or locality. In 1926 the *Daily News* was the instrument of the mass in America's largest city. To this group, as to the masses throughout the nation, Rudolph Valentino was a passionate expression of the glamor and romance so fervently desired and so hopelessly unrealized in their lives. Charles Eliot was known to few and then primarily as a quiet little man responsible for a number of ponderous volumes whose contents were less familiar than their well advertised ability to fill five feet of shelf room. Unless symptoms are causes, the tabloid cannot be held guilty for emphasizing Valentino at the expense of Eliot.

New York turned out 2,000,000 strong and roared itself hoarse "welcoming" Gertrude Ederle on August 28th. Broadway was covered with a record tonnage of confetti and the *News* that day was little more than a cheer for the Channel conqueress. Another big demonstration provided the meat for the issue of August 31st when Valentino's funeral was witnessed by 100,000. On September third a local record was set with SEVEN KILLINGS IN 15 HOURS and then the *News* reverted to the Hall-Mills case which was still good for a daily streamer. Then came the Dempsey-Tunney fight in Philadelphia to claim the first three pages for September 22nd, 23rd and 24th.

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On October fifth a great romance was shattered when PEACHES QUILTS BROWNING but two days later the *News* was able to restore its confidence in the power of true love. "Bud" Stillman announced that he was about to share his father's millions with Lena Wilson, a woodcutter's daughter. These two stories took care of October.

From the first of November until the fifth of December the *News* front page stayed in New Brunswick to cover the closing testimony in the Hall-Mills trial. Mrs. Hall was pronounced not guilty on December fourth and was permitted to slide back into obscurity. Again Daddy Browning came to the rescue. This time he was being sued by Mary Spas who claimed that he had inflicted brutalities upon her.

So it went through the winter until March 21, 1927 when the Snyder-Gray hammer murder broke. Although the trial was not scheduled to open until April 18th the *News* started its build-up in March with front page headlines such as GRAY'S 4 LOVES and GRAY DID IT ALL, Says Ruth. This story received the most sensational treatment ever accorded a crime by the *News*. Signed articles were extracted from Judd Gray, the sad-faced corset salesman and his sweetheart Ruth Snyder who had combined talents in killing her husband after making practical financial arrangements. In June, Ruth was executed and the *News* accomplished its most noted camera coup with the printing of a picture taken in the death chamber

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just after the current had been turned on. The prison authorities had requested that no pictures be taken but the *News* photographer, answering a higher call, strapped a camera to his ankle and succeeded in taking one of the most gruesome pictures ever printed in a newspaper. A storm of protest was aroused but the *News* could afford disapproval of an action which sold an estimated 500,000 extra copies of the paper.

For a number of years, this death chamber picture has been used as a symbol of tabloid sinfulness, pointed to with furious indignation as proof of the righteous contention that the tabloid is an intolerable, anti-social evil which must be eradicated. But, there is another side to the argument, a belief that the printing of such pictures is justified by the same reasoning which justifies capital punishment. Listen to clergyman Charles Francis Potter speaking eleven years later in the *Reader's Digest* on the subject of electrocution.

“When you come to think of it, why not have cameras? Why not have moving pictures and sound films? If these executions are supposed to have a deterrent effect on other criminals, why not exhibit all over the country a vivid record of the entire proceeding? If it is all right for the public to read a printed account, why is it wrong for the public to be given the story by a more accurate medium? Ah, that's the trouble! The photographs would be too vividly accurate. Written accounts can be toned down.”

Nor was this picture without historical precedent.

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Until the half-baked humanitarianism of the nineteenth century labeled such practices as barbaric and inappropriate in advanced societies, it was customary to carry the logic of punishment for crime to its conclusion. Retribution to society was made publicly and the remains of those whom society had seen fit to kill were exhibited as a warning to future transgressors. The practice of social murder continued but the frank acceptance of its purpose was covered over by new veils of "good taste." When photography was extended to reporting the news it found itself bound by the new constraints; if society killed criminals or the members of another society it was all right to describe the results but pictures were too brutal. And when the tabloid, a form of newspaper based largely upon photographic reporting, violated tradition by extending its coverage to the death house, it was guilty of perpetrating a "horror." The outcry against this picture is more to be regarded as a reflection of social time-lag than as a proof of the tabloid's wickedness.

These grotesque excitements which agitated the *Daily News* were only a reflection of the frenzy which was spreading through American life as the decade neared its climax. Business went mad with the intoxication of soaring profits, morals exploded into a "new freedom" and the daily press roared forth a harmonizing chant of accelerating sensationalism which reached its climax in May 1927 when a young aviator was lifted from obscurity to the summit of fame and mass

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worship. In its excitement over the "Lone Eagle" the press attained a peak of ballyhoo beyond which it could not climb. Nobody could be given greater fame than Lindbergh; no story could be inflated with greater mounds of copy; no public could be stimulated to more intense hysteria; no ecstasy could be further prolonged.

Two years later the business balloon collapsed and the frenzy was over. Overnight the spirit of the country changed more profoundly than it had in many years. The confidence and sense of ultimate security which had characterized American life even after the World War was shattered by the stunning severity and persistence of economic hardship. Thrust into a new and frightening period, the people turned their interest upon serious matters, for reality pressed at every turn.

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ONE of the most interesting parts of the story of the *Daily News* is the way it has adapted itself to the changing currents of American life. In 1920, as we have seen, it was a fairly sober little newspaper, distinguished from others mainly by its smallness and its pictures. When the lid blew off in the middle twenties, the *News* flared into a fiery journal of excited sensationalism and abandon. So accurately did it reflect the peculiar atmosphere of these hectic years that it came to be associated with the period almost as a symbol. And when the period came to an abrupt halt with the Crash of 1929 the tabloid again altered its ways in sympathy with the changed spirit.

This time the change was slow. When we look at the typical early depression issue of March 1, 1930 it seems that the *News* had been unaffected by the six months of chaos and suffering that followed the September collapse in Wall Street. As a business, the paper was still enjoying vigorous prosperity. Circulation had mounted to 1,280,000 and the offices had been moved to a magnificent new skyscraper on East 42nd Street

SNOOK EXECUTED; Wife Shared Last Meal

Story on page 2



PLAYS DEATH TUNE.—This saved-off shotgun was carried in vain case to prison of the Port Newark, N. J. National bank yesterday by one of three thugs who lost their nerve, and hurried away when Patrolman James Parnett started shooting it out with them. He got winged, but stayed in fact till "rough guys" fed.—Story on page 2.



HIS LAST SUPPER.—Frat, James H. Snook dined with his wife last night in cell adjoining execution chamber at Columbus, O. Snook kissed his wife and walked to chair death.—Story on page 2.



TO RATHER DIE.—Fireman Frank C. Murray's shoe is in the foreground of this wreck at 222 st. and Park ave. His trunk crumpled into part of another fire apparatus, and

his legs were almost severed. Doctors amputated both, and he said, "I'd rather be dead than have no legs." Other firemen stand near wreck.—Story on p. 2; see p. 12.

RUM ORPHANS A GIRL.

Mary Olson was the step daughter of John Henderson, who was an ethical bartender. He wouldn't give Michael Kelly a drink because Kelly was drunk, so the abusive pro-fighter of sorts blazed away. Henderson died. Mary identified him; Kelly faces grand jury. "He was a real father," said Mary.—Story on page 2.

Frances Williams Sued for \$100,000

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which was a veritable house of wonders with a lobby full of fascinating meteorological instruments.

As a newspaper it also appeared unchanged. The front page (see opposite) echoes the spirit of 1925 with its play-up of Snook, the teacher of veterinary medicine at Ohio State University who had just been executed for murdering his co-ed sweetheart. Each of the next five pages is topped by a banner headline and the stories are in the familiar manner. The important news of the day is embraced in a single column on page two headed "THE NEWS In Tabloid" and the rest of the space on this page is devoted to diverse items including a raid upon a "DeLuxe Bar" in Brooklyn and a decision upholding the five cent fare on the subways. Page three's sensation is provided by Tommy Manville, the heir to a huge asbestos fortune who has made a notable career involving himself in a succession of "Love Suits" to the glee of harassed editors. This time Tommy is being sued by a former wife for money due her under a divorce settlement and the *News* headlines its account:

**EX-FOLLIES GIRL, EX-WIFE BURNS ASBESTOS
HEIR IN \$45,000 SUIT**

Also on page three is a story about an alienation of affections suit featuring Frances Williams, well-known musical comedy singer. The headline reads:

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WIFE SUES FRANCES WILLIAMS

Milliner Calls
Blues Crooner
A Love Pirate

The inevitable picture of Miss Williams is captioned "Love Equals \$100,000?"

With the exception of four pages of sport news, the rest of the paper is given almost entirely to features and pictures. All the old favorites are still playing their familiar tunes. Antoinette Donnelly is still helping *News* readers to beauty and charm, Doris Blake continues smoothing the course for troubled lovers, Dr. Evans carries the banner for health and Mrs. Gladys Huntington Bevans writes daily on the latest fad, child study. Contributions are still invited for "Embarrassing Moments", the "Voice of the People," "Bright Sayings of Children," and the "Inquiring Photographer." The comics are still running the adventures of "The Gumps," "Harold Teen," "Winnie Winkle," "Smitty," "Moon Mullins," and "Gasoline Alley." Fiction is still offered in two doses. Theatrical matters under the capable editorship of Burns Mantle fill a page and movies have expanded to two full pages. An additional feature is found in Sidney Skolsky's column of Broadway gossip which stems from the Winchell fount.

At the head of the editorial column runs a platform

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so similar to that of 1925 that one would not believe the times had changed:

1. A seat for every child in the public schools.
2. A five cent fare and better service [*on the subway*].
3. Improved traffic conditions in the streets.
4. Modification of the Volstead Act.
5. Another bridge across the East River.
6. More and better parks.

Except for the open opposition to Prohibition it is the same program of non-controversial, minor reforms which served five long years before. This day's editorial is entitled WHY DO WE HAVE PROHIBITION? Based upon testimony by W. W. Atterbury, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Pierre S. DuPont who find that the Volstead Act has made no noticeable change in the behavior of their employees, the piece calls for "clear thinking" and "cold facts" but makes no definite proposals one way or the other.

The eight stories on the front page of the day's *New York Times* include only two which appeared prominently in the *News*; one about Magistrate Vitale who was charged with borrowing money from the gambler Rothstein and then freeing him when he came before Vitale in court, and the other about the decision upholding the five-cent fare on the subway. Both accounts were mentioned only briefly in the *News* which found the *Times*' other six featured stories deserving of only a few sentences. These included accounts of the

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oil lobby's activities in the Senate, a reception accorded the board assigned to investigate conditions in Haiti, a British suggestion for another anti-war pact, the loss of a famous necklace sent here for sale by Austrian Archduchess Maria Theresa, a presidential election in Santo Domingo and a bulletin from ex-President Taft's deathbed.

Space tabulations for this issue of the *News* show little change since 1925 :

Total space available.....	2030 column inches
Total amount devoted to all kinds of	
news	492.5
Crime news	112.5
Sex news	39.0
Sport news	207.5
Straight news	133.5
Pictures	334.0
Features	572.5
Advertisements	378.5
Editorial	29.0
Filler	223.5

Since 1925 there has been a relative increase in space allotted to crime, pictures, features and the total amount given to all kinds of news but the changes are slight. Advertising appears to have decreased but this is not indicative of a decline in revenue; the year's totals show a rise from 6,832,478 lines in 1925 to 13,209,975 in 1930.

In every respect the *News* seems unchanged by the passage of the twenties. Its carefree spirit is unbroken

25 VICE CZARS IN DODGE'S NET

Story on Page 2



COLD WORK!—Firemen choose off their hood-and-belt truck after battling blaze ruined the interior of Church of St. Theresa of Avila, old church of Washington Heights, at 187th St. and Broadway, yesterday. Interior of edifice was destroyed.



DEFENSE RESTS.—C. Lloyd Fisher of Hauptmann defense is shown about to enter air liner at Newark for a two-week vacation. Friends of Bruno yesterday revealed plans for series of mass meetings to raise funds.



BARGE DRIVING HIS MOTHER OUT INTO SNOW.—Francis Bell, 28, stands likely before late in Night Court, charged with having driven from her home into anoxemia. Courtroom was packed, and mother didn't appear, as she was ill from effects of fog about in storm. Bell will be sentenced tomorrow.



GANGLAND SPEAKS!—Body of Rosario Riggio, counterfeiteer who turned grocer, lies in car (with open door) in which he was shot by two executioners yesterday in front of 1658 82d St., Brooklyn. Crowd has gathered. Riggio was killed to avenge slaying of woman a month ago.

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and its popularity undiminished despite the vast alterations in the climate of American life evoked by the depression. But in ten years the tabloid had sunk its roots deep into the urban mass and as their life changed the tabloid had to change, slowly because journalistic movement is always slow, but inevitably.

For two years after the Crash the circulation of the *News* hovered about the 1,300,000 mark but early in 1932 the upward climb was resumed. By March of 1935 it had reached 1,653,422 and the Sunday figure had attained the astronomic total of 2,578,412—both far beyond any precedent for American newspapers. The issue of March 1, 1935 filled 88 pages including a special 24 page section for Brooklyn readers. To a certain extent, the increased size is attributable to the normal surplus of advertising on Friday in anticipation of Saturday purchasing but the difference of sixty pages over the average for 1930 cannot be accounted for solely on this basis. The *News* had become a larger paper. It had also changed in character.

The front page is still sprightly and, on first glance, indicates no divergence from the venerable formula. Its sole headline, still large and black, announces :

25 VICE CZARS IN DODGE'S NET

Although this seems a typical sex-laden exaggeration it is actually only a colorful phrasing of the day's big-

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gest news item: District Attorney Dodge's vice investigation *was* the story of the day. The sober *New York Times* also gave the story first place on its front page with the headline, POLICY RING HIGHER UPS HUNTED AS MAYOR ORDERS GAMBLING AND VICE DRIVE. The pictures on the *News'* front page have lively captions but the page contains nothing that would not have been justifiable news for any paper.

Suggestions of a change in character are manifested on almost every page. None of the inside news pages has a banner headline and many of the featured stories deal with serious matters. Page two plays up an article about President Roosevelt's labor proposals written with evident sympathy for the demands of the American Federation of Labor. Prominent mention is also accorded an article demanding greater efficiency and less graft in the city's snow removal campaign.

News coverage has been broadened to include an unprecedented (for the tabloid) number of stories on national and foreign events. Short but accurate items deal with such subjects as the Abyssinian mobilization against Italy's impending invasion and the struggle between whites and Japanese over Arizona farming lands. An entirely new type of tabloid piece is revealed in a brief notation of the appointment of Professor Baldensperger to the Harvard faculty.

The tabloid had broadened its horizon but in so doing had deserted none of the old reliables. Considerable space is given to the fake Prince Mike Romanoff

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who was charged with spying on ladies in the society circles which had opened before his spurious nobility. The better part of a page is covered with exciting details of a California beach party in which two married couples had exchanged partners and repaired to adjoining bedrooms for the night. The sprightly headline reads:

QUADRANGLE OF LOVE SHRINKS TO TRIANGLE

Feature space has increased but the items are much the same—Nancy Randolph on Society, Dr. Irving Cutter on Health, Doris Blake on Love and Children, Elinor Ames on Etiquette, Antoinette Donnelly on Beauty; fashions, astrology, cooking, handwriting analysis and crossword puzzles. The "Inquiring Photographer" shows a turn to the serious with the question "Which do you prefer, President Roosevelt's \$50 a month clause in the Public Works Bill or the prevailing wage scale demanded by the A. F. of L?" The day's editorial deals with the Hauptmann trial and recommends periodic reprieve until the clinching evidence turns up. Fiction is offered in the familiar two doses: a serial by Alice Campbell entitled "Keep Away From Water"—a fashionable romance in a setting of Continental wealth and sin—and a short story by Dorothy Scoville which relates the struggle of a simple country wife to make a more romantic spouse of her phlegmatic husband.

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At last the columnist has come into his own. The *News* has enlisted four headliners, Ed Sullivan on "Broadway," Sidney Skolsky reporting daily tidbits from Hollywood, John Chapman collecting Manhattan vignettes and Paul Gallico on sports. Jimmy Collins, famous aviator, contributes an article on his piloting experiences and there is a daily column of Washington news by John O'Donnell and Doris Fleeason. The theatrical section has expanded to five pages calling for the ministrations of Burns Mantle and two movie critics. Comic strip diversion is delivered in nine parts, contest interest provided by that perennial favorite, a "Beautiful Baby" competition, radio has its own page, and Wall Street and finance fill another. Sports claim the better part of eight pages including several columns of horse-race dope. The sports department has added a new feature of tremendous popularity by sponsoring athletic contests such as the "Silver Skates" in the winter and the "Golden Gloves" boxing tournament which is announced in this issue. It is difficult to imagine a form of entertainment presentable on paper which is not found in the *News*.

Comparison with the *Times* offers further evidence of the tabloid's altered tone. Every one of the eight stories featured on the *Times*' front page is prominently mentioned in the *News* and although the relative amount of copy given by the two papers shows to the advantage of the *Times*, it is interesting to note that both papers agree which items should be empha-

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sized. The *Times* plays up the Dodge investigation and the wage legislation controversy giving them the front page spotlight. To details of the Vice story the *Times* devotes almost an entire page with far more copy than the subject claimed in the *News*. Pictures appear on many of the *Times*' inside pages and features have been increased with the addition of a daily book page, an expanded society department, a greatly increased theatrical and movie section. The tabloid and the big paper were drawing closer together through the simple and inevitable course of copying each other's successful characteristics.

Space tabulations for this issue of the *News* confirm the visual impression :

Total space available.....	6380	column inches
Total amount devoted to		
all kinds of news		615.5
Crime News	89.0	
Sex News	92.5	
Sport News	99.0	
Straight News	335.0	
Pictures		354.5
Features		733.5
Advertisements		4427.0
Editorial		29.0
Filler		220.5

The most striking indication of these figures is the growth of advertising from 378 inches in 1930 to 4427 inches in 1935. More than two-thirds of this

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1935 edition were devoted to advertisements and the yearly totals show that the issue of March first was not unusual. For 1935, the *News* had an advertising total of 17,817,490 lines, second in New York only to the *Times* which had 19,420,969 and it is significant that while the *Times* had declined from a total of 28,200,444 in 1925, the *News* had risen from 6,832,472 in the same year. The *News* was the only paper in the City to increase its advertising lineage steadily throughout the depression and the reason is not hard to find. Advertisers could not resist the circulation which might carry their wares before more eyes than any other newspaper in America. At first the *News* had been forced to combat conservative prejudice against its small pages and the supposedly low-income classification of its readers, but by 1935 it was claiming the largest amount of retail and department store advertising in the city and, by way of confounding those who persist in numbering tabloid readers among the "great unwashed", the *News* announced in 1935 that it had the largest annual total of soap advertising of any paper in New York.

Further comparison of the space tabulations with those for 1930 shows that the total amount of news matter had increased by one-third, crime news had decreased by almost one-half, pictures occupied about the same space and features had grown by one-third. When we recall that the increase in sex news was due largely to the inclusion of the Dodge Vice Investiga-

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tion story which was featured by every paper in town it is seen that the figures show a distinct trend away from sensational subjects and toward coverage of serious matters. The *News* was coming of age.

Yet, the basic formula with which Patterson had started the tabloid in 1919 had undergone no significant change. If he had set forth the essentials of the *News* technique they might have been these: Each day play up one story, preferably related to crime, sex or heroic achievement. When one of these subjects is not available, almost any story will do but it must be magnified sufficiently to attract attention. Fill the paper with pictures and be sure that many of them have high personality content. Include large quantities of fiction, gossip, advice to the lovelorn, asylum for the troubled and a goodly sum of simple amusement. Stand vigorously upon an editorial platform which is broad enough to permit policy to be liberal, conservative, patriotic or moral as the occasion seems to demand but never forget that the tabloid's causes must be popular causes, at least in name. Practice a limited, colorful vocabulary. In sum, produce a picture newspaper which is a compendium of extraordinary happenings and simple comment, exciting, entertaining, reassuring and couched in the living language of the day.

This may not be the most elevated set of journalistic principles, but its limits are sufficiently broad to permit the publication of a good newspaper and by 1935

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the *News* had become a good newspaper. Good because it tells the news in a manner well calculated to make it real to the masses; because it applies itself seriously to the task of interpreting the news, because it provides entertainment and diversion for those who need them most and because it has begun to use its tremendous power toward the progressive solution of social problems.

The list of services which the *News* performs for its community includes many of genuine merit. Promotion of competitive athletics among the masses, sponsorship of summer camps for under-privileged children and alert, if over-cautious support of political liberalism are all worthy functions of a mass newspaper. No better illustration of the *News*' editorial vigor could be found than that offered by its recent series of articles on syphilis which won a 1936 Pulitzer Prize in journalism for their author.

While other newspapers persisted in hiding the problem behind a veil of euphemism ("social disease"), and printing as little as possible about the matter, the *News* ran several well documented articles and gave tremendous impetus to the long-overdue movement for the eradication of a cancer which exists largely because the press has refused to aid in stirring the public from apathy. In the field of politics, the *News* has developed into an advocate of progressive liberalism in support of the leftward-moving wing of the Democratic Party. Its news columns have been

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opened to an increasing amount of documentary material and it has adopted the excellent practice of giving full pages to spokesmen for the various contending factions in elections. It has truly become an open forum of debate and provides its readers with the materials for intelligent suffrage.

Nearing the end of its second decade, the *Daily News* has developed into a vital social instrument, one of the few newspapers in America which can be counted among the liberal supporters of an embattled democracy struggling against the onslaught of economic collapse and reactionary pressure. Its history and present merit bear sufficient testimony to the inherent possibilities of the tabloid form.

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THE instantaneous success of the *Daily News* made it inevitable that tabloids would spread over the country. American publishers had been slow to see the possibilities of the tabloid style but once Patterson's experiment began to yield profits they were quick to follow. By 1925, six years after the appearance of the *News*, two more picture papers had sprung up in New York City and a dozen more were being published daily in large cities from Buffalo to Miami and from Philadelphia to San Francisco.

In keeping with the robust American tendency toward exaggeration, commentators in the middle twenties gave themselves freely, and with an unmistakable undertone of dismay, to predictions that the tabloid would soon sweep the older journalism into discard. Its appeal to the masses, they sighed, is apparently irresistible. Their magazine articles cried, "Picture Papers Win."

During the ensuing decade, tabloids have come and gone according to the time-honored fashion of newspapers. There have been good ones and bad ones, brilliant successes and hopeless failures. But their num-

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ber has increased steadily and their circulation has mounted. *Editor and Publisher's* authoritative annual for 1937 lists 49 American tabloids with a combined circulation of more than 3,525,000 a day, almost twice that on Sunday. The figure is respectable but it can hardly be called cataclysmic when compared with the 40,192,226 circulation attained by the 2,078 dailies published in the United States during 1936. This group of forty-nine papers, combined with other tabloids that lived and died between 1919 and 1937, comprises the American tabloid press—a body with a lively, significant history despite its youth and its failure to banish all other journalistic forms into obscurity.

Since tabloid methods have been spread in varying degrees among all American newspapers, it is necessary to make an arbitrary elimination and deal only with those papers which have been true to the basic tabloid formula—small format, condensed writing and liberal use of pictures. Despite the structural similarity which unites this group, its members have displayed wide differences in tone, content, purpose and success. Viewed collectively, American tabloids fall into three general classes—a large middle-of-the-road type, an elevated upper-class type and an abandoned, ecstasically sensational type.

The most numerous and most successful style of tabloid has been that which devoted itself to outright imitation of the *Daily News*. None of this class has

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been able to duplicate the circulation of the *News*, but some of them (Hearst's *New York Mirror* and *Boston Record* and the *Chicago Times*) have acquired followings of several hundreds of thousands and have attained such permanence as exists among newspapers. A second, smaller group includes the so-called "clean" tabloids—papers such as the *Washington News*, the *Los Angeles News*, the now-defunct Vanderbilt tabloids and the *New York Post* during its tabloid period in the fall of 1933. All these papers have been based upon a non-sensational form of tabloidism. The third class, divertingly far out on the lunatic fringe, embraces such journalistic peep-shows as Bernarr Macfadden's *New York Evening Graphic*.

There have been tabloids which do not fall into any of these groups—trade papers, party organs and a variety of specialized journals—but these three classes tell the story. Since it is neither possible nor necessary to cover each American tabloid, we shall concentrate upon the most interesting in each group—The *Mirror*, the Vanderbilt chain and the *Graphic*. They cover the breadth of the American tabloid story from Vanderbilt's seriousness through Hearst's mediocrity to Macfadden's elementalism.

When Patterson began his tabloid experiment in 1919 he was, in a sense, enlarging the field of combat of a long-lived newspaper war, the bloody battle between his *Chicago Tribune* and Hearst's *Herald-Examiner* which started before the World War. Com-

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pared to this struggle, the earlier tussle between Hearst and Pulitzer was little more than a confetti contest. The intensified competition of the twentieth century had taught publishers to rely upon circulation managers whose confidence in the selling power of superior journalism was extremely limited. The bitter struggle between the two papers was fought as much in the streets and back-alleys as in the city-rooms. Rival gangs of sluggers preyed upon delivery trucks, destroyed papers and so disported themselves that their deeds have been called "The beginning of gangsterism and racketeering in Chicago."

For a number of years, the lower-class newspaper market in New York had been virtually a Hearst monopoly divided between his morning *American* and his evening *Journal*. When the *Daily News* appeared, Hearst was betrayed by over-confidence. Although he had always been exceptionally quick to see the journalistic tricks which please the mass, he apparently failed to perceive the threat of the tabloid. For three years, he let Patterson go his way and when he finally stirred himself into action the *News* had already gained a solid foothold. New York was no place for strong-arm tactics á la Chicago—it was too big—so the impending struggle was confined to more purely journalistic methods than those which had characterized the previous rounds.

The first skirmish over the lottery contest has already been described. It ended in a draw but it taught

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Hearst that his only hope against the tabloid was another tabloid. At first he sought to find a compromise method through the inclusion of a daily tabloid section in the *American*. The results were meager and the expense was great. On the morning of June 24th, 1924 he brought out the first issue of a full-blown tabloid, the *Daily Mirror*.

It was appropriately named, this addition to the Hearst chain—a mirror of the *Daily News*. Whatever the motive behind its publication, whether or not it was a desire to beat the *News*, the paper was a slavish imitation of the *News* from the start. In format, the duplication was so exact that one had to look at the mastheads to tell them apart. Their pictures, news stories, special departments, even their features sprang as if from a common inspiration. The *News* ran a “Tongue Teaser” contest; the *Mirror* countered with “Tongue Twisters”. The *News* brought out an evening edition; the *Mirror* also appeared in the evening. The *News* sent a photographer out to take pictures of crowds in the streets and gave prizes to those who could identify themselves; the *Mirror* did the same. When reproached for this similarity, Hearst is said to have replied, “An imitation of the *Daily News*? Of course. The front page of the *Mirror* looks like the front page of the *News*. That’ll make a lot of people buy it under the impression they’re getting the *News*.” But let us look at this *Mirror*.

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The purposes of the paper were set forth in an editorial which deserves quotation in full:

HOW DO YOU DO

DAILY MIRROR is pleased to meet you, hopes to know you for many a year and to deserve your friendship.

This newspaper will endeavor to render service to its readers, faithfully representing their interest.

DAILY MIRROR'S program will be 90 per cent entertainment, 10 per cent information—and the information without boring you.

We ask readers to write and tell us what they DO NOT LIKE. DAILY MIRROR's motto will be "short, quick, and make it snappy."

If a newspaper is to be judged by its success in fulfilling stated purposes, Mr. Hearst's *Mirror* commands admiration. It has always endeavored to live up to the "short, quick, and make it snappy" formula, nor has it ever diverged far from its promise of "90 per cent entertainment, 10 per cent information." Whether the information has been boring or not is a matter for individual determination, but it should be noted that the *Mirror* was true to its time in the selection of its aims. It would be difficult to find a more accurate label for the years following 1924 than "short, quick and make it snappy". America was in a hurry—for big money, for greater speed, for more fun; fun in cars, fun in speakeasies, fun in jazz, fun in movies, fun in newsmen. And the *Mirror* was ready to do its share.

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After the five-year-old model of the *Daily News*, the new tabloid filled its front page with pictures laid out under a single banner headline FLIES IN DAY FROM SEA TO SEA. The pictures portrayed exciting, if minor happenings—a runaway horse on Brooklyn Bridge, a man who had killed his wife and a young child whom an “Insane Slayer” had attempted to kill. Page two was headlined SMITH-McADOO FIGHT FATAL TO BOTH but the preponderance of copy on the page was non-political and written in sympathy with the “90 per cent entertainment, 10 per cent information” dictum. This illustrative paragraph headed a story entitled SHE MUST PAY:

Does the woman pay? Ask a little madonna who, sadfaced and garbed in black, slipped into Common Pleas Court, Newark. Last week she gave birth to a son. She strangled him to death because she had neglected to marry before she dipped into the mysteries of sex.

Under the headline GIRL, TAXI, KISS COST \$400, HE SAYS appeared the following item:

Just a little girl in a taxicab, winsome, pretty, and with a kissable mouth. Maybe a kiss in the dark, who knows?

The rest of the story told how the young lady had accepted a kiss and neatly purloined the Lothario’s bankroll.

In order to dramatize the news, the *Mirror* em-

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ployed a graphic, wordless form of reporting. Across the bottom of page two, ran a strip of pictures illustrating the intelligence that FIRES OF REVOLUTION RAGE ABOUT ITALY'S MUSSOLINI. Il Duce was portrayed as a robust knight bravely stamping out the embers of opposition to his righteous regime. The same method was used on the next page to tell the story of a man who poisoned his wife to gain his freedom for another love. Needless to say, these drawings were much more vivid than any word account could have been. Thus would the *Mirror* make the news short, quick and snappy.

The remaining pages before the middle picture section were devoted wholeheartedly to entertainment and advertising. Spread among full page ads from Hearn's, Macy's, Gimbels, Russeks and similar stores were five cartoon strips, a column on Fashion Patterns, several paragraphs of marriage advice and an article about that city editor's dream-girl, Peggy Joyce, whose connubial exploits were headlined LOVE, HATE MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. Miss Joyce had already become the national symbol of marital prodigality.

In addition to the introductory editorial quote above, the editorial page offered two short editorials—a moderate rebuke to the Ku Klux Klan (in the North Hearst was officially opposed to the Klan) and, under the heading NOTHING LIKE A BABY, a happy salute to Irene Castle's impending maternity. The *Mir*

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ror was editorially delighted to note that America's most famous dancer found the joys of world renown but tinsel when compared with the true happiness of motherhood. The connection between this story and the previous item about Peggy Joyce was left to the reader. Also upon this serious page was a cartoon celebrating the end of the saloon and a discussion of ARE WE EVER TOO OLD FOR MARRIAGE? by that indefatigable publicist, Dr. Louis E. Bisch.

Upon the center two-page spread of pictures appeared an assortment of bathing beauties, a picture showing the havoc wrought by a tornado in Racine County and a shot of William Jennings Bryan listening to a radio—one of those sprawling early sets topped by a huge curved horn. In 1924 the phenomenon of radio was still news but its use was already so widespread that the *Mirror* devoted an entire page to radio news and programs and ran a cartoon strip about THE RADIO CHITS.

Three full pages of theatrical news were preceded by a page of pictures showing how delegates to the Democratic National Convention might entertain themselves in New York while wrangling over the Presidential possibilities of Roman Catholic Alfred E. Smith, Klan-endorsed William Gibbs McAdoo and dark-horse John W. Davis. The fiction for the day was typical and timely—a serial entitled FLAMING YOUTH replete with pictures of drinking and light loving and a “Daily True Story” called A QUEEN

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OF BROADWAY which told the heartrending saga of an actress who had been the toast of New York but now was reduced to peddling flowers upon the street which once had seen her name in lights. Sports filled the last four pages of this thirty-two-page issue. There was a featured column by Gene Fowler, a candid blow-up for Mrs. Hearst's Milk Fund and pictures of Jack Dempsey ("The Manassa Mauler"), Harry Wills ("The Black Panther"), Firpo ("The Bull of the Pampas"), and Rudolph Valentino in becoming undress.

What did the *Mirror* offer that could not be found in the already established *Daily News*? Obviously nothing. Yet, the new tabloid gained circulation rapidly. In March 1925, the nine-months-old paper crossed the 250,000 mark and by the summer of 1926 it had mounted to 370,000, a total exceeded by only one morning paper in New York—the *Daily News*. The wonder seems even greater when it is remembered that in 1926 the *News* was selling over 1,000,000 copies a day and another tabloid, Macfadden's *Graphic*, was finding several hundred thousand readers each evening. None of the other New York papers had lost circulation, yet, in less than seven years three tabloids had acquired 1,500,000 readers apparently conjuring them up out of the blue. How did the *Mirror* manage to attract its following in the face of an already successful rival which offered all that the *Mirror* had—and more?

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The apparent marvel is best explained by reference to a more recent and analogous phenomenon—the over-night success of the picture magazines which seem to have tapped virgin springs in the American magazine market. *Life*, *Look*, *Pic*, *Click*, etc.—they have appeared in amazing numbers and attracted millions of regular purchasers. At present there seems no limit to the market for cheap picture magazines; people will apparently buy as many of them as appear on the newsstands. To a lesser degree, this was true of the tabloid in its early years. Millions of people were attracted to the bright, colorful new picture-papers and they bought them whether they were called *News*, or *Mirror* or *Graphic*. At this time and for a number of years the difference between the *Mirror* and the *News* was negligible but, after a while, the *Mirror* was to evolve its own individuality.

For the first two years there was little spectacular about the *Mirror*. In the five years since the appearance of the *Daily News*, the tabloid formula had been well worked out in every detail of form and content. The *Mirror* seemed content to string along as an imitator, duplicating the *News* with flattering exactness. And this would have been enough to assure moderate success in these years of boundless prosperity. An adequate amount of advertising was easily secured and the circulation chart described a happy upward swing. But Mr. Hearst was not satisfied with moderate results especially when confronted by the sight of the *News*

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rolling blithely along in apparent ignorance of the existence of any rival. Why should the *Mirror* sell only 300,000 copies when the *News* was selling 900,000? The question was answered in characteristic Hearst fashion. Out came the money bags and Philip Payne, the able managing editor of the *News* shifted allegiance.

Naturally, the new editor introduced little change in style or content; the *Mirror* already coincided with his ideas of what a tabloid should be. A typical issue of the paper during 1926 contained the same pictures, stories and features as the original edition, and they were done in the same manner. In a strictly journalistic sense, Payne did nothing for the *Mirror* but he did raise its circulation considerably and by the most ancient of newspaper tricks. He *made* a story—probably the biggest made story of the decade—the Hall-Mills murder case with whose details we have already become familiar.

The spring of 1926 had been filled with many sensations, but summer found the *Mirror* momentarily hard up for headline subjects. Daddy Browning's marriage to Peaches had been wrung dry; Kip Rhineland-er's brown bride was a dead letter; Earl Carroll's champagne bath had lost its bubbles. In fact, the best that could be found in the line of straight sex stories had been exploited to the full. The same was true of straight crime stories. What the country needed was a story which combined both great fundamentals.

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Payne's men found it in the files of the Hall-Mills murder.

The case, as we have seen, had been closed four years previously by a coroner's inquest which declared Mrs. Hall innocent of any connection with the deaths of her husband, the Reverend Edward Hall and his sweetheart Eleanor Mills. The story was old but it had both sex and crime and, after all, what is more intriguing to an editor (and the majority of his public) than an unsolved murder which reeks with love interest and centers about a philandering clergyman? A bit of new evidence was unearthed, presented to the Jersey authorities and the hapless widow found herself "on trial for her life."

For a day the *Mirror* had a scoop. By the next morning the story was on every front page in the country. But, the *Mirror* had the inside track and was never bested in its coverage of the story. The trial was highly dramatic and fulfilled every cinematic notion of what should happen in a courtroom. Surprise witnesses were sprung; oratory was in the grand manner; an eccentric invalid (the "Pig Woman") was wheeled into court on her "death bed" and the record throbbed with innuendo and detail concerning the relations of the Reverend with his choir-singing sweetheart. In the end, Mrs. Hall was again declared innocent and allowed to pick up the threads of whatever private life she had left, but it had certainly been worth the trou-

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ble. The *Mirror's* circulation went over the 400,000 mark during the summer.

When we come to the March 1, 1930 issue of the *Mirror* we find that confidence had grown. At the top of the front page the *Mirror* now proclaimed itself "New York's Best Picture Newspaper"—not quite up to the magnificence of the *Journal's* "America's Greatest Evening Newspaper" but more satisfying than the *News'* "New York's Picture Newspaper". However, the circulation of the *Mirror* had not advanced beyond 450,000 while that of the *News* had risen to 1,500,000. What was the *Mirror* doing now that story-making had failed to give it the edge over Patterson's vigorous paper?

Superficially there seem to have been no changes; still the familiar similarity to the *Daily News*. Page one's headline ran "SNOOK Kisses Wife Then Dies in CHAIR". The *News*, we recall, phrased it SNOOK EXECUTED, Wife Shared Last Meal. The *Mirror* offered less news than we found in the rival paper but the featured stories were much the same. It is evident that the *Mirror* was not concentrating its energies in this department. On closer examination, the paper shows signs of a new development, a change less of character than of degree, a specialization in the *Mirror's* chosen field of "90 per cent entertainment". The *Mirror* had begun its metamorphosis into a columnist's playground.

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Leading the pack was the amazing Walter Winchell in whose work is concentrated the essence of the tabloid. In a few years the dynamic, restless Mr. Winchell had risen from the obscurity of vaudeville to a prominent place in the national spotlight. But his career had hardly begun. Within a short time radio would pick up his staccato-voiced "flashes" of gossip about the glamorous figures of Broadway and Hollywood and send them out to a million eager ears. The movies would rocket him to stardom. His income would mount to a par with those of giant industrialists. But already "Mrs. Winchell's Little Boy Walter" had become a great figure, his ON BROADWAY column the *Mirror's* star attraction.

When Winchell was serving his apprenticeship on Macfadden's *Graphic*, the newspaper "column" was a long established institution with an American tradition going back to the "personal" journalists of the early nineteenth century. Until the innovations of the 1890's turned the column to popularized uses, it had been restricted usually to matters of political nature. Nor was gossip about the personalities of the entertainment world a neglected item of newspaper appeal. We have already seen the part it played in the success of the *Police Gazette* during the 1870's. But, previous to Winchell, the two had not been combined in such a manner as to attract wide popular attention. As an ex-hoofer, Winchell had a strong interest in theatrical personalities which he realized was not restricted to

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“the profession.” When he turned his talents to supplying the public with a daily column of delectable “inside stuff” a journalistic phenomenon resulted.

Winchell’s success is not hard to explain. His two primary subjects, Broadway and Hollywood, were already among the half-dozen most reliable sources of newspaper copy. In the absence of a nobility such as is enjoyed by the English public, Americans turned naturally to the romantic creatures of the entertainment world for their essential diet of scandal, comic relief and inspiration. Winchell had good connections and an amazing capacity for getting people “in the know” to reveal their secrets. The sources of his information are, of course, secret but the process is not difficult to picture.

The avidly curious columnist gets about a good deal himself but, for the major portion of his material, he is dependent upon a myriad of willing informants—people with a score to settle, people who are publicity-crazed, the vast numbers who are thrilled at the thought of participating in the publication of words which will be read by millions of eager eyes.

Whatever the sources, Winchell produced. He mounted a careful watch over Broadway, Park Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard and dutifully predicted the course of Cupid’s arrows from the first sign of romance to the final detail of divorce. His column was laden with little intimacies that tickled the insatiable curiosity of a people unequaled in that quality, a peo-

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ple of champion excavation-watchers descended from a race of champion porch-sitters and cracker barrel columnists.

In all ages and in all lands gossip has been the favorite form of conversation. Winchell put it on a twentieth century footing for consumption by a public whose gossip horizon had been broadened tremendously by the growth of big cities and the spread of standardized ways of living. He conducted his readers on a daily tour of the fabled night spots, took them into the boudoirs of their favorite heiresses, playboys and entertainers, made them feel the delight that comes from intimacy with the great. So widespread is the pleasure derived from the mere sight of great names in print that Winchell would probably have succeeded if his column had contained only a bare list of famous personalities with a brief note about each. But actually he gave much more. In addition to the standard gossip items he offered numerous special departments of which the following are typical: NEW YORCHIDS or BOKAYS OF OKAYS—praise for some new performer or song or anything that struck Winchell as new and interesting: NEW YORK NOVELLETES—short short stories usually with a glamorous background and an ironic ending clinching a reliable moral; NEW YORK IS THE PLACE WHERE— items about the innumerable curiosities of the town. And many other creations of his fertile imagination.

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Those who have not succumbed to Winchell's spell are heard to say "But doesn't it become boring, this endless repetition of romances, marriages, births, divorces and trivialities?" That Winchell does repeat the same thing over and over again is not to be denied and, while it is doubtful that his public's appetite for his product is ever capable of being satisfied, it is possible that the master might have lost his grip—had he not been possessed of an ingenious, imaginative, colorful and amusing style, probably the most imitated of newspaper styles. As an active contributor to the American language Winchell has hardly a peer. For ten years he has produced an unceasing flow of syncopated words and phrases which have been widely quoted because they have struck the fancy of the day. For him—and for a large part of the nation—courting became "dueting", a romancing couple became an "item" because they were "that way about each other", marriage became "middle-aisling", the birth of a baby became a "blessed event"—his masterpiece. Such Winchellisms are almost without number. Many of them have already become common features of urban speech.]

Insiders are agreed that Winchell is responsible for about 200,000 of the *Mirror's* readers and while precise evaluation of his drawing power is difficult to make, clues are not lacking. In the Hearst organization salary is a fairly accurate index of productive capacity and Winchell's is probably the largest drawn by

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any writing newspaperman since the deaths of Arthur Brisbane and O. O. McIntyre. Winchell's fame is certainly the greatest enjoyed by any columnist in America today; he is the symbol of his profession. His radio program is among the most popular on the air. His movies have been good box-office attractions. The state of public feeling toward Winchell can be inferred from George Jean Nathan's observation that "In twenty-seven plays and forty-three motion pictures during the last four years there have been actors who patterned themselves after Winchell in characters representing Winchell." He has even been immortalized in song, the once popular "I Want to Be in Winchell's Column".

ON BROADWAY appears in many newspapers that are not tabloids but Winchell—better than anyone else—epitomizes the spirit of the tabloid. Brief, synco-pated style, candid absorption in the simple phenomena of birth, love and death, sophistication combined with sentimentality, insatiable love of sensations and devotion to the private lives of prominent persons—this is the tabloid.

In support of its star, the *Mirror* offered eight other featured columnists. As if to make certain that not a single nugget of the Broadway gold mine was left unexposed, Mark Hellinger's BROADWAY EPISODES was included. This column fed upon the same sources that supplied Winchell, but Hellinger was more the spinner of yarns and less the Main Stem Oracle.

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One imagines the reader turning first to Winchell for the "inside dope" and then reading Hellinger as a sort of fictional supplement. Nick Kenny's column "Getting an Earful" was devoted entirely to radio but partook liberally of the Winchell manner, finding most of its substance in the personalities of the performers rather than in information about radio itself. Under the heading NOW, Emile Gauvreau wrote daily on timely topics. Gauvreau had come to prominence as editor of the *Graphic* but his column was in a serious vein and attempted to interpret important matters of the day.

The quality of Gauvreau's work is suggested by the circumstances surrounding his departure as managing editor of the *Mirror*. In 1934 he wrote a series of articles on Soviet Russia which were printed at that time in the *Mirror*. Later, they were included in his book "What So Proudly We Hailed". Gauvreau reported upon Russia as he had seen it and the resultant impression lacked the fanatic partiality with which Russia is customarily treated by the Hearst press. In 1935, the matter was drawn to Hearst's attention by an indignant wire from Major Frank Pease, a professional patriot whose energy is directed against the Red menace. Apparently Gauvreau refused to submit to the inevitable ukase from San Simeon and he left the fold.

Alfred McCann's daily advice on food matters provided the *Mirror* with a fifth major attraction. The late Mr. McCann had built up a considerable follow-

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ing (at least among the manufacturers and advertisers) and his decisions on such subjects as the relative merits of white, brown and black bread were believed to have wide-spread influence. Also to be found each day in the *Mirror* were the columns of Fay King on personal matters, Frances Dutton on Fashion, Gladys Glad on Beauty and Sally Martin whose "Tell It to Sally" was in the traditional Dorothy Dix manner.

In addition to the columnists, the entertainment content of this 1930 issue of the *Mirror* included an article by Major C. F. L. Kipling on "The Inside Story of King George V" which was advertised as "published by special permission of Buckingham Palace." Fiction was still true to the pre-depression spirit. The serial was entitled "Flaming Youth" and the other story, "Young Sinners" told "An Inside Story of Today's Youth and Its Headlong Rush for Sensations." The seven comic strips had a page of their own. Stock market tips were offered in a column of "Today's Best Bets" and a full page was given to horse-racing prognostications.

When the appeal of this *mélange* is summarized one is prepared to admit that the *Mirror* had covered the newspaper entertainment field with thoroughness. With the possible exception of astrology and philately, not a single common interest had been overlooked. But, when we look at the *Mirror* five years later we find that the development along this line had been carried even further.

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The luminaries of 1930 have not been displaced—with the single exception of McCann whose place had been taken by Elizabeth Leonard—but they have been joined by a galaxy of new columnar stars. Additions include the “Washington Merry-Go-Round” by Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen (a liberal presentation of inside information from the Capital), a column of amiable miscellany by Hendrik Willem Van Loon, a spicy society corner conducted by Barclay Beekman, “Hot from Hollywood” by Jimmie Starr, a daily sport piece by Dan Parker, a short but worthy bit on books by Charles Wagner, racial humor by Milt Gross, Love by Beatrice Fairfax and sport sidelights in pictures by Feg Murray. Who could want more? In fact, who could want this much? Answer: circulation had risen to 540,000 daily and 991,514 on Sunday. By 1937 the daily figure was running over 600,000.

The *Mirror* had discovered that simple imitation of the *Daily News* was not enough to guarantee its security. A specialty was needed and, with the aid of Hearst's vast resources, it was found in the offerings of a varied collection of newspaper prima donnas who gave the paper a considerable selling power. Not that the earlier resort of fabricated stories had been abandoned. In 1936, the *Mirror* produced another example of imaginative reporting in its coverage of the famous Titterton rape-murder. Nancy Titterton, a writer of short stories, was found in her East Side apartment brutally raped and killed. All the New York papers

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gave the story a generous play but when the guilt was fixed upon John Fiorenza, an unbalanced upholsterer's assistant, the story slipped off the front page. The *Mirror* stuck to its guns with a sensational serial purporting to reveal "Fiorenza's Own Amazing Story" as he had told it to a *Mirror* reporter. In the course of the account, assertions were made that Mrs. Titterton had probed Fiorenza "for literary material" and that she "forgave him for an attempted attack." In other words, she knew of his passion but tolerated his attentions while drawing him out as a source of story material. In a well-authenticated article, the *New York Post* blasted this story as a thorough-going fake and asserted, upon authority of the District Attorney's office, that nobody had interviewed Fiorenza and he, in turn, denied that he had ever given out the material on which the story was allegedly based.

As a newspaper, the *Mirror* has been consistently inferior to the *News*, but its continued growth has proven the tabloid to be a malleable form. Even in the face of superior competition, it can be molded so as to attract a considerable following.

In other cities, the tabloids of this imitative group have not had to struggle against the parent paper and consequently have not been forced to diverge far from the pattern of the *Daily News*. Inevitably, they have developed certain individual characteristics, but, for the most part, these adaptations have merely reflected the personality of the city. A few briefly noted examples

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will suffice to round out the picture of this type of tabloid.

After allowance is made for the parochial character of Boston and the special requirements of Hearst ownership, the *Boston Daily Record*—successor to the *Boston Advertiser*—falls solidly within the shadow of the *Daily News*. With the exception of the *Evening Transcript*, which concentrates frankly upon satisfying the demands of a small upper-class group, the Boston dailies are all sensational, extremely narrow in their news coverage and given to over-emphasis of local matters. The uninspired competition offered by other members of this journalistic poorfarm has made it unnecessary for the *Record* to develop into much of a paper. It offers practically no foreign news and the national field is covered only in the most superficial manner. A typical issue gives prominent space to only one item of international significance—the Nazi condemnation of Marlene Dietrich as a traitor to Germany for her association with the Jews of Hollywood. The three-inch story is accompanied by an eight-inch, double-column picture of the famous Dietrich legs.

Sports news receives greater emphasis in the *Record* than in any other major tabloid. For scandal, crime and society news, the *Record* has, of course, a national horizon but political news is restricted, in the main, to local issues. Among the features, not a single column is devoted to serious matters and the only items which derive inspiration from outside of Boston are Louis

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Sobel's VOICE OF BROADWAY and Harrison Carroll's BEHIND THE SCENES IN HOLLYWOOD. The numerous minor features include the usual columns on beauty, fashions, astrology, puzzles, funnies, True Stories, serials, an "Inquiring Reporter," and a daily success story of the Horatio Alger type.

At the head of its editorial column, the *Record* sets forth a platform which, except for the characteristic Hearst touch, is reminiscent of those we saw in the *Daily News* fifteen years before. It calls for :

1. New England material and labor for New England public works.
2. Adequate protective tariff for New England industries.
3. Radio equipment for Police Departments.
4. Expulsion of sweat shops.
5. Lower and more equitable auto insurance rates.
6. Police protection for Boston citizens—not rackets.

This *Record* is a colorless, undistinguished paper, yet the popularity of the tabloid is strong enough to have earned it a daily circulation for 1937 in advance of 340,000. Others in this group show the tabloid form to better advantage.

The *Chicago Daily Times*, like the *Daily News* makes a serious effort to cover important news. The writing is brief but not lacking in skill or color. The editorial policy is one of vigorous liberalism. On occasion the paper displays a sensationalism which is perhaps exaggerated but, since the excitement is usually

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aroused over such serious matters as secret fascist activities in the United States, the *Times* is subject only to modified criticism on this score. In addition to the standard tabloid features, the *Times* offers several columns of serious merit. Jay Franklin writes daily upon national politics. Gail Borden conducts an excellent column of news and information on international subjects. Herbert Agar writes on politics and Eleanor Roosevelt contributes the widely syndicated diary of her active life, "My Day."

Although the *Times* is only five and one-half years old, it has already assumed an important position in Chicago journalism. Circulation is more than 360,000 daily, advertising is considerable and the paper is regarded with unconcealed respect by local newspapermen who call it "less a tabloid than a good little paper."

These three papers—the *Mirror*, the *Record* and the *Times*—are amply illustrative of the type of tabloid which derives without major alteration from the *New York Daily News*. Also to be included in this group are several tabloids of high circulation: the *New Orleans Tribune*, the *Philadelphia News*, the *Harrisburg* (Pennsylvania) *Telegraph* and the *Columbus* (Ohio) *Sunday Star* and, indeed, the preponderant number of American tabloids. Some of them are similar to the *Mirror* and rely primarily upon their capacity to entertain. Others are of more serious intent and attempt to give their readers a broader view of the

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important news. But, all are true to the basic pattern laid out by Patterson in 1919. All can be described as picture papers endeavoring to attract large popular audiences by the use of condensed, colorful writing, emphasis of sensational stories, generous inclusion of diverting features and devotion to reliable, non-committal editorial policies. They form the central, most successful body of the American tabloid press, the channel into which most tabloid energy has been directed.

The striking uniformity which characterizes these tabloids is the inevitable result of their origins. All were produced by big business publishers whose journalistic principles were dominated by the viewpoint of the merchant. In the tabloid they saw a means of exploiting a hitherto neglected market among the urban masses. Accordingly, their papers were guided with primary sensitivity to the demands of this group as established by the test of the newsstand sale. The tabloid was molded into a journal of sensation and amusement, standardized as are all social instruments in a period of advancing mechanization.

But, as noted at the outset of this chapter, this is not the only form which the tabloid has assumed in the United States. Serious efforts have been made to utilize the practical advantages of the tabloid format in the production of a non-sensational newspaper, the so-called "clean tabloid." And, of course, there have been papers which cast convention to the winds and carried

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the tabloid to a dizzy climax of super-sensationalism. Neither of these types has attained the permanence or success achieved by the middle-of-the-road tabloid but both are essential to the story and both have left their stamp upon American journalism.

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AMONG the interested observers of Patterson's tabloid experiment was a young aristocrat just returned from the War. Against the opposition of his conservative clan, twenty-one-year-old Cornelius Vanderbilt, Fourth, had decided upon a newspaper career and in traditional style had started at the bottom with a twenty-five-dollar-a-week reporter's job in the city room of the respectable *New York Herald*.

The difficulties facing young Vanderbilt at this early stage in his career may be surmised from a story familiar to local newspapermen. While checking on a reported strike at Grand Central Station, Vanderbilt made himself conspicuous among the group of reporters by pelting the Station Master with numerous personal questions. The harassed official suddenly turned on his annoyer with, "Who are you anyway?"

"I am Cornelius Vanderbilt," replied the reporter.

"And I," said the Station Master, "am P. T. Barnum."

This sort of atmosphere was obviously not conducive to maximum efficiency as a reporter. On another occasion, Vanderbilt is said to have committed the

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modest error of allowing a rival reporter to scoop his paper on the story of his own engagement. The famous "Farewell to Fifth Avenue" was evidently a difficult parting.

The city room of a New York newspaper is an interesting place but its possibilities are limited and the progress is slow especially for a youth of Vanderbilt's ambition and wealth. Before long he began to experience sensations similar to those which had sent young Hearst flying to battle with Pulitzer. Vanderbilt had a vision of newspaper empire and in Patterson he found his example. But, where the Hearst dream had been largely lust for power, Vanderbilt's was a complex mixture of idealism and naïveté. Hearst knew simply that he wanted to publish newspapers of large circulation with Pulitzer's *World* as a model. Vanderbilt admired Patterson's tabloid but he desired to use it for the furtherance of an ideal. His dream had the heroic nature of a crusade—the establishment of "a clean newspaper in every town in which vileness and sensationalism now play too great a part in the local press," was the way he put it.

Patterson had proven that the tabloid could be a paying proposition in America and Vanderbilt felt certain that eventually every newspaper in the country would be forced to adopt tabloid methods. As he saw it, the new format was irresistible because of its cheapness, its convenience, its popularity and the inevitable advance of photography. He proposed, however, to

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make several alterations in the *Daily News* pattern. His papers would give much greater space to news accounts and would abjure sensationalism in favor of a clean, serious tone which would feature "a youthful outlook on the country's problems." The only troublesome question was that of location. New York was out of the question; the market was already well covered and the cost of buying in was prohibitive. In 1923 Vanderbilt made a trip to the Pacific Coast and in Los Angeles he found his spot.

The reasons he later gave for selecting Los Angeles illustrate the spirit behind his enterprise. "I chose Los Angeles because it is the fastest growing city in America. Second, because if a newspaper went in this city, which is the closest newspaper corporation in the country it could go anywhere. Third, because the Pacific Coast will be to the coming generation what the Atlantic Coast has been to generations in the past. Fourth, because Los Angeles is the most American city, by the census of 1920, in the country and it has been said that a tabloid newspaper could go only in a city where a great part of the population could not read English. I wished to disprove this. And fifth, because the center is Hollywood, which to the outside part of the country, is known as a more or less salacious place, and I wanted to prove that the placing of a clean newspaper in such a locality could be as much, if not more of a success than in any other place."

It would seem that Vanderbilt was entering the pub-

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lishing field in an effort to disprove every accepted rule of the game. A hint of a more practical reason for selecting Los Angeles is found in a story carried by many papers early in 1923. Outraged by the scandalous excesses of the Los Angeles dailies, local community organizations held a mass meeting in January, 1923, to see whether or not something could be done to elevate the tone of West Coast journalism. Representatives of women's clubs, Rotaries, Kiwanis, Chambers of Commerce, etc., announced that the time had come to clean up the front page and warned the papers that action would be taken unless they abandoned their sensational habits. The atmosphere was obviously congenial for the young crusader. In announcing the appearance of the *Los Angeles Illustrated News*, he proclaimed that "never will stories of divorce, scandals or those containing gruesome details of murder appear" in the columns of the "cleanest tabloid in the country."

Only the question of finance remained to be settled and this would seem to have been an easy problem for the heir to millions, but the family still controlled Cornelius' fortune and their enthusiasm for the venture was far from unbounded. Said young Vanderbilt to a *Times* reporter, "It wasn't a question of tabloids or the blanket size of a newspaper. It was the family's aversion to newspapers and to my participation therein." And later in an article entitled "It Is Hard To Be A Rich Man's Son" in *The Saturday Evening Post*,

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he declared, "Probably the news of the commencement of my own newspaper almost caused a hemorrhage to some members of my clan." Even the thought of spilling blue blood could not discourage him and in 1923 Vanderbilt Newspapers was incorporated with a capital of \$5,000,000, much of which was contributed by public sale of stock. On September 3, 1923 the first issue of the *Illustrated Daily News* appeared.

In physical characteristics, the paper was a typical tabloid, slightly larger than the *New York Daily News* but the contents were similarly arranged. In other respects, it diverged widely from Patterson's paper. The news was presented soberly and factually with an almost total absence of sensationalism. Typography was restrained, sex matters were scrupulously avoided and emphasis was placed firmly upon serious subjects.

More than any previous American newspaper, the *Los Angeles News* depended upon pictures for its coverage of the news. In his elaborate prospectus Vanderbilt had stated: "There can be condensed into a newspaper page of actual photographs and their underlines, more actual news and information of what has happened than can be gleaned from many pages of type." Accordingly, his paper relied almost entirely upon pictures and reduced its word accounts to a minimum. The C V news service which Vanderbilt organized devoted most of its energies to photography.

[Vanderbilt's primary interest centered upon the editorial page. He stood upon this platform:

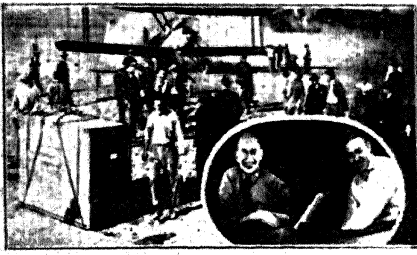
FINAL EDITION
TEL. 289-131

Illustrated Daily News

ONE CENT DAILY
FIVE CENTS SUNDAY
PUBLISHED DAILY
EXCEPT ON SUNDAYS
AND HOLIDAYS
1934
Copyright, 1934
By Daily News, Inc.
No. 1000 Broadway
New York, N. Y.

Vol. 1, No. 164—Twenty-eight Pages Los Angeles, Saturday, March 1, 1934

NEW CAPITAL SCANDALS! MARINES LAND IN HONDURAS



FIRST 'ROUND-WORLD PLANE PLEASES FLYER—Photo shows first of four globe-trotting planes taking off at Douglas Field yesterday morning in test flight. Close-up reveals (left) Lieut. Eric Nelson, crack birdman, telling Lieut. C. C. Mosley, commander at Coney Field, where plane sighted after flight, of his delight with "ship" which may make history.



INDICTED—A Chicago federal grand jury yesterday indicted J. W. Thompson, left, and Charles R. Fisher, former head of the Veterans' Bureau, on the charges of bribery and conspiracy. Their bonds were fixed at \$5000 each.



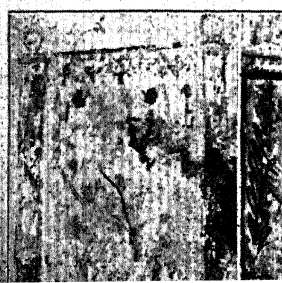
INVESTIGATE FIRE CAUSE—Members of the arson squad sought the cause of the third fire in sixty days yesterday in a sixteen-room house at 2677 Wilshire boulevard. Below, left to right, are Mrs. L. H. Easta, occupant of the house; Detective Lieutenant J. J. Hastings of the police and Capt. E. H. Enor and Lieut. M. E. Brynker, both of the fire department.



DOG SAVES LIVES OF FAMILY—"Primo," just plain dog, has been awarded a gold medal for saving the lives of a South Boston family from a burning home. Here he is with the family he saved and showing the method used in making the rescue.



SERIOUSLY ILL—Princess Louise of Belgium, who is seriously ill at Washington.



INVESTIGATE ENGINE—SENATOR Egan—Senator Egan—Smith, McKelvey, Tennessee.

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1. Americanism.
2. California—united. (*This referred to strife between the cities.*)
3. Adequate traffic facilities for Los Angeles.
4. More schools for Los Angeles.
5. More playfield for Los Angeles.
6. Clean press—a paper that may safely enter the home.

Except for the last item, the program might have fitted any tabloid . . . or any newspaper.

Each day, Vanderbilt wrote the single editorial, always under the heading, "The Public Be Served"—an obvious rephrasing of his grandfather's famous broadside. His style was simple and rather colorless but his attitude was occasionally laden with dynamite. He was no radical but when he supported union labor and attacked vested interests he created a tremendous stir in the big-business-dominated atmosphere of Los Angeles. This editorial liberalism, almost unique on the West Coast, was unquestionably a great source of his paper's popularity. It involved Vanderbilt in constant turmoil with the civic powers but it drew vociferous applause from the people, especially when he attested his sincerity by insisting upon union labor in his own plant and voluntarily gave his employees a two-week vacation with pay. The latter is still a bone of contention in many city rooms.

The feature content of this paper was fairly uninspired. It included such characteristic tabloid departments as "KIDDYKUTE SAYINGS," "The Inquiring

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Photographer," "I Was Embarrassed" and a large assortment of comics. It also played heavily upon contests.

In short, the *Los Angeles Illustrated Daily News* was a non-sensational tabloid with less news than pictures, an assortment of ordinary features and a vigorous, if somewhat chaotic editorial policy. The mixture evidently pleased the public. Within a short time the paper had built up the largest circulation on the Coast and had acquired considerable influence in Los Angeles affairs. With time and experience Vanderbilt might have developed it into a good newspaper but he ran into non-journalistic difficulties which brought his publishing career to a premature finish.

Trouble started even before the first edition was on the stands. Local moralists may have welcomed the arrival of a thoroughly clean paper but other interests seem to have felt differently. After a number of copies had rolled off the press, Vanderbilt was amazed to discover that the front page did not contain the sober material scheduled to appear. Instead, it reeked with salaciousness in word and picture. If the paper had arrived on the streets Vanderbilt would have been a national joke—"the cleanest tabloid in the country" and its first issue smoldering with sex! But, Vanderbilt was able to delete the objectionable matter and by quick substitution of other items got the paper out on time.

Subsequent investigation revealed, according to

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Vanderbilt, "a widespread plot to ruin the *Los Angeles News* from the start." Upon examination of the staff it was discovered that more than twenty-four reporters, editors and pressmen were involved in the scheme. Vanderbilt charged that they had been sent by rivals "to pollute the paper from the inside as often as possible, to turn its claims of cleanliness into a matter of ridicule." He also asserted that advertisers and local financial interests were in conspiracy to obstruct his progress.

It is unfortunate that more specific charges were not published for it would be interesting to know the nature of the powers behind the conspiracy. Not that such tactics were unprecedented in the newspaper world or, more particularly, in the ruggedly individualistic atmosphere of the region which had recently saved democracy by framing Mooney and Billings. But, the whole comi-tragic story of the Vanderbilt newspapers is filled with suggestions of sinister opposition from the entrenched powers of the West Coast. Throughout the three years of their existence, his papers were subject to bitter assault from the local press and the interests which controlled it. Vanderbilt made mistakes but he certainly was correct in assuming that if he could succeed in Los Angeles he could make a go of it anywhere. Unfortunately, his "if" was too heroic.

Despite the near fiasco of the first issue and the opposition therein symbolized, the *Illustrated Daily*

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News made phenomenally quick gains. Within a year its circulation had vaulted to 178,719, the largest held by any paper in Los Angeles. The power wielded by the paper is suggested in an article by William Knox printed in the *Outlook* in May, 1926, which asserts that Vanderbilt "held the political destinies of the city in the hollow of his hand." "He was able," declares Knox, "almost singlehanded to re-elect the incumbent Mayor of Los Angeles against the united opposition of the conservative element and the flaming hostility of every newspaper in the city except the Scripps *Record* and the Hearst papers which maintained a silent neutrality." By this time the *News* had a circulation of 215,000, larger than that of any paper west of St. Louis. But the seeds of collapse had already taken root.

In pursuit of his editorial keynote ("The Public Be Served"), Vanderbilt embarked his paper on numerous campaigns which were more courageous than politic. His columns opened vigorous attack upon such established institutions as the Los Angeles Community Chest, the Los Angeles Coliseum, the Crime Commission and the management of the Veteran's Bureau. These activities were all supported and dominated by the captains of local industry who had little love for the interloping Eastern aristocrat with his irresponsible democratic notions. When he dared to challenge their control of community organizations and more particularly when his rising circulation established

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him as a real threat to their power, they apparently moved into action with all the potent financial weapons at their command. The business community is always able to assert its voice most effectively through its control over a newspaper's advertising (viz. the rape of the Tugwell Pure Food and Drug Act in 1935). The *News* circulation should have put it in a position to command more than adequate advertising revenues but actually the paper was not drawing its fair share of advertising spoils. Vanderbilt was forced to raise his price from one cent to two and this naturally brought a drop in circulation. Eventually, the popularity of his paper might have enabled it to overcome the hostility of business interests but in the spring of 1926 a combination of other factors resulted in a financial crisis in the affairs of Vanderbilt Newspapers Inc.

Vanderbilt was a thoroughgoing optimist with a restless hankering for instantaneous success. These qualities were not tempered by an adequate appreciation of the practical problems of business management. Less than a month after the appearance of the *Los Angeles News* he was engaged in preparations for a similar paper in San Francisco and on December 10, 1923 the *Illustrated Daily Herald* appeared.

The Los Angeles experiences were duplicated almost exactly. Vanderbilt charged that the San Francisco papers refused to carry his paid advertisements announcing the appearance of the new paper and

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advertisers failed to give him even the normal amount of co-operation. Nevertheless, within a month the *Herald* had a circulation of 150,000.

Vanderbilt was already projecting plans for a third paper. It appeared in Miami, Florida, in the latter part of December, 1935. A \$1,000 contest was held to determine the name of this final addition to the chain and the prize went to the creator of *Miami Tab*. In addition to the three newspapers, he also published the *Vanderbilt Weekly*, a syndicated Sunday supplement and the *Vanderbilt Farmer*, a magazine "for the benefit of Florida agriculturists."

Exaggerated and over-speedy as this expansion was, it might have worked out if Vanderbilt had been assisted by competent business associates. But, as stated by his lawyer, Dudley Field Malone in the *Wall Street Journal* in April 1926, he "placed responsibility in the hands of trusted men who mismanaged the corporation's affairs and produced the need of heavy financing to run the newspapers and protect the holdings of stockholders." Still, the venture might not have collapsed if Vanderbilt had been supported by his family's more than ample resources. But Brigadier General Vanderbilt was known to be "anxious to get his son out of the publishing field." If the stern old gentleman had been able to foresee the journalistic exposés which his son was later to produce as a freelance writer, he might not have been so quick to turn him loose from the helm of his publishing enterprise.

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But by 1926 the family had already poured over one million dollars into the papers and the time seemed ripe to call a halt.

In fact, the outraged father had already taken steps. In 1925 he had sent an agent, Harvey Johnson, to represent him in the management of the *Los Angeles News*. Under Johnson's regime the paper ceased its vigorous attack upon the respectable interests and adopted a more conservative attitude. This undoubtedly cost the paper some of its support among liberal elements.

In the spring of 1926 the financial crisis came to a head. Vanderbilt Newspapers Inc. was surveyed by a group of experts who decided that \$300,000 of new capital would be enough to tide the corporation over for six months. By that time, it was estimated, revenues would have risen sufficiently to permit profitable operation. Vanderbilt came to New York in an effort to secure backing and declared himself ready to pledge his entire fortune as surety for the loan. The newspapers, he declared in interviews with the New York press, were all "going concerns" and certain to produce profits if they could be carried over the momentary impasse. He pointed out that the *Miami Tab* had a circulation of 35,000, the *Los Angeles News* had 100,000 and the *San Francisco Herald* had 83,000 despite a recent advance in their newsstand price.

In his *Wall Street Journal* statement, Vanderbilt proclaimed that it was his ambition to "create some-

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thing splendid and progressive in the field of journalism," but nobody could be found to underwrite the worthy ideal and the family was adamant. The corporation was liquidated. All publications came to a halt except the Los Angeles paper which was purchased by E. Manchester Boddy who continued its publication as a clean tabloid.

Vanderbilt's high-minded enterprise suffered the inevitable fate of mismanagement but the soundness of his ideal has been outlined by the subsequent success of the *Los Angeles News* under Boddy's more business-like direction. Vanderbilt had already proven that the clean tabloid could be popular; Boddy now proved it could be profitable. Without making any profound alterations in the form or spirit of the paper, he developed it into one of California's outstanding papers, "noted" in the words of *Time* magazine "for its bold and colorful handling of the news, the advanced economic views presented by Publisher Boddy in his column 'Views of the News.'" It enjoys the economy, convenience and popularity of the tabloid without sacrificing the broad news coverage and serious tone customarily connected with the large-size papers, a combination of virtues which goes far toward justifying the belief that this is the form which the daily newspaper will come to adopt in a day of increasing costs and accelerating tempo.

Let us look at a typical issue of the *Los Angeles News*, that of January 31, 1938. The six-column front

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page looks less like the face of a tabloid than a shrunken front page of a conventional big paper. It has only one picture, a small shot of the prominent airplane designer Howard Vultee and his wife who were killed the previous day in an air crash. This is the featured story and claims the big headline which covers the top of the page in tabloid style. Above this there is another full-page headline reading:

1000 SLAIN IN AIR RAID ON BARCELONA

In type and in content, the rest of the page differs little from other papers of the day. United Press dispatches cover the Rebel air massacre at Barcelona and the controversial Navy Bill sent to Congress by President Roosevelt. Sharing column six with the Vultee story is an article on the war in China. At the extreme left appears Boddy's column of liberal comment on matters of political importance.

The spirit of the front page is duplicated throughout. News accounts are similar to those in large-size papers in their completeness, but occasionally a minor item is written with the color characteristic of the tabloid. Full pages are given to labor, national politics and foreign affairs. Pictures occur with less frequency than in the *New York Daily News* and there is no center spread of illustrations. Considering the proximity of Hollywood, it is notable that not a single example of "leg-art"—the so-called tabloid staple—is to be

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found anywhere in the paper. Typography is moderate, falling somewhere between the sober monotony of the *Times* and the abandoned exaggeration of Hearst.

The feature content shows a similar fusion of tabloid and big-paper characteristics. In addition to Publisher Boddy's daily stint, the columns include Pearson and Allen's "Washington Merry-Go-Round," R.R.K.'s "Today and Tomorrow" (serious comment on politics), Ken Frogley's "The Morning After" (sports), Matt Weinstock's "Town Talk," Marion Stewart on Homemaking, Lee Averill on Beauty and so forth. There is also a miscellany of minor features including the customary assortment.

Editorially the *News* plies a liberal course somewhat left of center. The editorial page rarely contains more than one or two editorials but these are treated in full and without the complete simplicity and typographical emphasis characteristic of many tabloids.

Stimulated by the success of his paper, Boddy bought the failing *Los Angeles Post-Record* in January 1935. He changed its name to *Evening News*, converted it into a tabloid and in less than a year doubled its circulation. With the exception of such minor matters as a pink cover, the inclusion of Westbrook Pegler's column and an added amount of fiction, it is a duplicate of the morning *News*. In 1937 their combined circulation was in advance of 185,000 daily.

Reduced thus to a table of contents, the *Los Angeles*

Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday
 Saturday
 Sunday
 3 Cents

The News



Served by Post-Dispatch News at United Press Association

Entered with
 second class
 postage paid
 at Washington,
 D. C.
 Post Office
 No. 112
 Paid at
 Washington,
 D. C.

FINAL EDITION
3¢

WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1938

FAMINE MENACING VICTIMS OF FLOOD

Death Toll Exceeds 200

Movie Star Describes Floods



By MADELINE CARROLL
 (Special to the United Press)
HOLLYWOOD, March 4—I feel a little incredulous relating my experience the past four days when so many more dramatic and important things have happened all around me than I can recall. I believe it was the most dramatic and exciting time I've ever known.

The first thing the cinema-land heard of was that of our famous movie star being in the line of fire. The situation was so serious that a young man died. But I did not realize what it was like.

LOS ANGELES, March 4—Dwindling food supplies added to the suffering today in flood-ravaged southern California.

Officials said the death toll might exceed 200. Eighty-seven persons were known dead. One hundred fifty were reported missing and believed dead.

Property damage was estimated at \$25,000,000. Ten thousand persons were homeless. Many communities still were isolated and without communication facilities. Looting of abandoned homes was widespread. Six men were arrested for it. Sheriff Eugene W. Biscaruz of Los Angeles County issued orders to bring in looters "alive if possible—but bring them in."

Waters were receding today; the weather was clearing after four days of cloudbursts, but the gigantic task of rehabilitation was yet to get under way. A score of towns were without power or light; some were still half-submerged in ebbing waters; bridges

(Continued on Page 12)

Photograph on Front Page.

Directors Demand Morgan Quit TVA

(See Editorial on Page 12)

President Roosevelt made public today a statement by Harcourt A. Morgan and David E. Lillenthal, directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority, asserting they could no longer work with Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, TVA chairman, and suggesting his resignation.

The letter was made public after Dr. A. E. Morgan requested a congressional inquiry of the TVA and of the long-time feud between the board members. Both House and Senate members have proposed that such an inquiry be undertaken.

The demand for Morgan's resignation was contained in a memorandum to the President on Jan. 18. It charged Morgan had sought by unethical methods to "obstruct and subvert" decisions of the majority of the board. It charged him with pursuing a policy of "rule or ruin" in TVA administration.

Morgan's resignation was accepted by the board on Feb. 25. It was announced that Morgan would remain in the office until the end of the month.

R. P. Scripps Dies on Yacht at 42



ROBERT P. SCRIPPS

SAN DIEGO, Calif., March 4—Robert P. Scripps, controlling stockholder of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, died at 1 p. m. (P. S. T.) yesterday aboard his yacht Novia Del Mar, off Santa Margarita Island in Magdalena Bay. He was 42.

The news was received in a message to Navy Radio Headquarters here and relayed by four Admiral Shubert's Command, commanding the 11th Naval District. Other messages said that death was due to an internal hemorrhage.

The body will be taken to the point in the Pacific Ocean here, westward of L. S. 10, approximately 100 miles from San Diego.

Executive to obtain the carrying out of department policies.

Held in Mother's Straying
CHICAGO, March 4—Detectives went to a hotel today and picked up Theodore Danaher, 28, 18, high school senior and an unrepentant drunk, for questioning in the brother's last straying of his mother.

MISSILE PAIRS
 A pair of missiles was found in the city of...

LOST AND FOUND
 A pair of...

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News may seem little more than a characterless hybrid, but this is far from the truth. It has neither the eye-appeal of the typical tabloid nor the elevated purity of the best large papers but its fusion of the two styles results in a practical formula for a popular newspaper which is informative and interesting. From its pages can be gleaned a good appreciation of the day's serious news and, for those who are so inclined, a generous amount of entertainment. Only in size and in its editorial liberalism does it differ from the average newspaper and the former makes up in convenience what it lacks in respectability.

A more venerable though less widely circulated example of clean tabloidism is found in the Scripps-Howard *Washington News* which has been in successful operation since 1921. In general it follows a course similar to that of the *Los Angeles News* but with somewhat more marked resemblance to the typical tabloid. Its page is of the standard five-column size and its contents are arranged in conventional tabloid fashion.

Upon the front page of a typical issue—that of February 2, 1938—we find two large headlines, one devoted to a murder story and one to an event of political nature. The page contains less copy than that of the *Los Angeles News* and one of its pictures is distinctly in the tabloid tradition—a composite shot showing the hands of Paul Wright, San Francisco airport manager who killed his wife and best friend when he found them “in a compromising situation.” Otherwise

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the news coverage is like that in Boddy's paper—serious, complete and with a broad horizon. Political news, in consideration of Washington's major industry, naturally commands the spotlight.

The paper contains the usual tabloid middle picture section and offers the inevitable "True Story From Real Life." In addition to the standard features it presents the syndicated members of the Scripps-Howard stable—General Hugh Johnson, Heywood Broun, Raymond Clapper, John T. Flynn, Ernie Pyle and Eleanor Roosevelt. It is also notable as one of the few tabloids containing regular writers on music, art and books. This may be attributed to Washington's relatively serious, educated population which rates culture as second only to politics and major league baseball.

The editorial page of this paper is fuller than that of the average tabloid and speaks the no-longer liberal voice of Roy Howard. During the seventeen years of its career, circulation has risen gradually to the present high mark of 81,771 despite an advance in newsstand price to three cents. In sum, it might be described as a Scripps paper in tabloid form, reasonably good, generally serious but with a slight tendency to occasional bursts of sensationalism. Its continued healthy existence demonstrates that the clean tabloid has staying power.

In the neighboring city of Baltimore the Scripps-Howard chain staged another tabloid venture. In 1924

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the *Baltimore Post* was brought out in reduced format and with contents similar to those of the *Washington News* except for a slightly greater emphasis on sport news. Within three years circulation had risen to 100,000 and a year later it went over 107,000 but in 1928 reverses were suffered and the paper was returned to its former large size.

For three years Philadelphia had a respectable tabloid which is chiefly notable for the amiable manner in which it sought to adapt itself to the peculiar character of that city. In 1925 the *Philadelphia North American* was purchased by Cyrus Curtis who changed its name to *Philadelphia Sun* and irreverently altered its one hundred-and-fifty-four-year-old features to conform with tabloid requirements. The first day's salutation gives an eloquent description of the enterprise :

GOOD MORNING PEOPLE

The *Sun's* Good Morning to Philadelphia and the world in general is a promise that it will resolutely try to deserve its name. It will toil to shine cheerfully and to make all things of importance brightly visible. It will be guided by a great ambition to be cheering even on rainy days when it must shine alone, yet nothing of interest or significance will ever escape its penetrating rays. The *Sun's* news will be ably condensed from its own full A. P. service and the work of its own news staffs. Its photographic cameras will be everywhere taking pictures for its readers. It hopes—no, intends—to have the best newspaper pictures in the world.

The *Sun*, as you can see now that it is in your hand, is designed to be a paper for busy men and women who may

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find pleasure or benefit or both in a swift survey of the world's doings every morning. Briefly and briskly it will tell all the facts and leave out as much of the bunting as can be spared.

With pictures and comics and abbreviated stories, the *Sun* proceeded to shine forth, even it must be admitted, on dark days. Circulation rose gradually to 85,000. But, on a particularly dark day in 1928 its smile was turned to a frown by the appearance of a new orb in Philadelphia's sky, a new tabloid fathered by Bernarr Macfadden. As we shall soon see, the heat emitted by Mr. Macfadden's papers was not to be resisted, and soon the gentle *Sun* melted out of existence.

What has been styled the "first major experiment in publishing a conservative tabloid" took place in depression-bound New York City. Again, it was a case of streamlining an ancient and highly respectable newspaper. The *New York Evening Post*, founded by William Cullen Bryant in 1801 and famous for more than a century under a succession of able editors, had passed into the hands of Cyrus Curtis. The depression had brought hard times to the venerable, conservative paper and in 1933 it was in desperate straits. Resurrection was sought through conversion into a tabloid. Since the death of the *Graphic* in the spring of 1932 the New York evening field had been without a tabloid so the chances of success seemed fair.

The modernized *Post* which appeared on September 14th, 1933 was probably the most ambitious clean

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tabloid ever to appear in the United States. In format it was a standard five-column tabloid but its sixty-four pages contained more news copy than any previous tabloid in America. There were a total of thirty-eight pictures but, so great was the amount of wordage, they were hardly noticeable.

On the front page of this first issue were small pictures of President Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, then Governor of Pennsylvania. Both countenances were sober because, as the headline explained, U.S. ACTS IN COAL RIOTS—the chronic Pennsylvania coal crisis had erupted again. The rest of the front page stories were all serious and news dominated all the pages up to page twenty-two which was the editorial page. Here appeared lengthy items discussing N.R.A., Puerto Rico, the Socialist Party and the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy.

Equally unusual for a tabloid was the material on the next three pages—literary reviews and book news exclusively. Next came the features which included all the specialties. Then followed a twelve-page financial section and the paper ended with ten pages of sports news and comment.

Were it not for the announcement that the *Post* had become a tabloid and the concrete fact of reduced size it would have been difficult to believe that this really was a tabloid. The writing was sober and long-winded; there was a total exclusion of sensational items, not even an out-and-out human interest yarn. It was an

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inclusive, informative paper but it was dead. Curtis had merely taken a moribund newspaper and contracted its size. What the *Post* needed was life, color and vigor. In competition with the lively *World-Telegram*, the powerful Hearst *Journal* and the entrenched *Sun*, it had nothing to offer but sobriety and convenience of handling—features of comparatively little appeal in evening newspapers which had become increasingly animated after the War.

In December, 1933, the tabloid *Post* ended its career. J. David Stern, publisher of the *Philadelphia Record* and the *Camden Courier*, had been looking for an opportunity to enter the New York field and he found the harassed *Post* an easy buy. He changed it back to large size and embarked upon a course of liberal politics and large-scale contests which raised its circulation in four years to 300,000 and turned it into New York's most vigorous and forthright liberal daily.

What might have been done by a more inspired hand with the tabloid *Post* can be imagined and it is interesting to note how many features of the now successful *Post* fit into the ideal tabloid pattern. The writing is colorful and shows a keen devotion to personalities and drama in the news. Pictures are liberally used and typography is freely molded to suit the needs of the occasion. No paper in New York makes more intensive application of the contest stimulant; nor is the *Post* to be scorned for its contests. Many of them, such as the awarding of literary and artistic classics, are

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within the popular newspaper's function of extending cultural enjoyments. In all but format, the *Post* represents a good tabloid—a colorful, informative, vigorously liberal newspaper which is not bound by the constraints of journalistic tradition.

To conclude from this survey that the clean tabloid is doomed to failure is to credit the idea with the faults of its management. That it does not possess the tremendous popularity of its more earthy brothers is only natural; among newspapers, as among all forms of expression, mass approval is reserved for that which falls within the limits of mass appreciation. But the clean tabloid has succeeded where it has been given persistent and reasonably skillful support. This newspaper style which combines the advantages of the tabloid with those of the large-size newspaper may prove to be the solution to modern publishing problems. Its promise for the future is heightened by the marked trend of many tabloids toward more serious ways.

THE GRAPHIC



IN THE early days of the tabloid, aroused critics were accustomed to deliver their final blast by proclaiming that it had no right to call itself a newspaper. They referred to it in the words of the *Saturday Review of Literature* as “the new black plague,” debated upon the amount of harm it was achieving and agreed that whatever form of Satanic horror it might be, it certainly was not a newspaper. This judgment is clearly absurd as regards the tabloids we have examined so far, but there is some reason for applying it to the third class of tabloid exemplified by the *New York Evening Graphic*.

From start to finish, *The Graphic* was a madcap venture which produced some of the most fantastic exploits in journalistic annals. During its lifetime it attracted more censure than has been visited upon an American newspaper since the first anti-Hearst crusade. It was quickly renamed the “Porno-Graphic,” banned from respectable homes and widely regarded as the worst form of debauchery to which a daily newspaper has ever been subjected. Today it is remembered vaguely, along with speakeasies and short skirts as one

THE GRAPHIC

of those quaint signposts of the mad twenties. Library files are chastely devoid of its lurid imprint. The prosperous Macfadden organization, now respectably housed in two skyscrapers on 42nd Street, labels it "a dead issue" and refuses even to talk about it. But at its height, the fascinating paper attained a circulation of 600,000 and in Detroit and Philadelphia similar Macfadden tabloids achieved considerable followings. The movie-like story of this unique enterprise is probably without equal for color and for candid exposure of the peculiar spirit that arose in America during the post-War years.

A new star burst upon the magazine horizon in 1919 when Bernarr Macfadden brought forth his monthly, *True Story*. Macfadden's previous activities had been confined largely to the physical culture field where he had achieved prominence as an advocate of simple living and the back-to-nature answer to civilization's problems. In his new magazine he proposed to support morality by the confessional form of fiction. Ordinary people would tell the stories of their romance difficulties and, after accompanying the anonymous author through his or her well-illustrated tribulations, readers would learn that virtue pays.

For Macfadden, virtue paid from the start. Within five years circulation had risen to 1,000,000 and the profits were such as to arouse desire for greater glories in Macfadden's robust bosom. Surveying the newspaper field, he observed that there seemed to be no

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limit to the number of tabloids which could be sold in New York City. When more than a million copies of the *Daily News* and the *Mirror* could be dispensed each morning did it not seem likely that great rewards would heap upon the man who could supply a tabloid in the evening? But Macfadden visioned no ordinary tabloid.

In the first place, he would not be satisfied in the role of mere business-man publisher. He had a mission in life and his paper would be guided by an ideal. As he phrased it, "This paper will be devoted largely to self-help." That is, it would be written *by, of and for* its readers, that they might be led along the road to a sounder life in body and spirit. In the second place, Macfadden had an idea. As related by one of the staff members, he "reasoned that if a million readers paid a quarter each to palpitate with a good woman who kept her virtue despite temptation, countless readers would pay two cents a day to read the same kind of story with the names, addresses and pictures of the leading characters." No, this *Graphic* which appeared on September 15th, 1924 was no ordinary tabloid.

In the leading editorial Macfadden set forth his aims and the methods by which they were to be accomplished. It was entitled WE ARE OF THE PEOPLE and, after a good amount of comment in the vein of "the publication of a newspaper is a grave responsibility," it proclaimed:

THE GRAPHIC

We intend to interest you mightily. We intend to dramatize and sensationalize the news and some stories that are not new.

But we do not want a single dull line to appear in this newspaper. If you read it from first to last and find anything therein that does not interest you, we want you to write and tell us about it.

We want this newspaper to be human, first, last and all the time. We want it to throb with those life forces that fill life with joyous delight.

We want to show our readers how to live 100 per cent.

Don't be a dead one! Gird up your loins. Make ready to fight for the thing that you want in life and if you read the GRAPHIC with sufficient regularity you can be assured of worthwhile assistance.

This was followed by an editorial platform :

OUR PLATFORM:

1. Elimination of all intolerance, religious or otherwise.
2. Abolishment of all forms of government censorship.
3. Elimination of graft and favoritism in business and politics.
4. Direct primaries for all elective officials.
5. Amendment of all prohibitory laws that infringe constitutional rights as originally interpreted by the framers of the American Constitution.
6. A seat for every person in our subways and elevated trains.
7. Bridge the Hudson to New Jersey. . . .

Starting off in the indicated direction, the front page featured a story with the headline :

SHE GAVE UP ART FOR A BARONET

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It throbbed "with those life forces." Also upon this page, which had at its top the *Graphic's* motto NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, was an item captioned I KNOW WHO KILLED MY BROTHER related by Mrs. Minnie Nunamacher whom the *Graphic* had drafted to write her own story.

From cover to cover this was an extraordinary newspaper. Let's look at a few of the high lights. Page two featured MY FRIENDS DRAGGED ME INTO THE GUTTER—ANN LUTHER which was introduced with the following explanatory note:

Sunk into the depths of loneliness, Ann Luther, motion picture actress, is today in hiding in Hollywood. Since she lost her \$1,000,000 suit against Jack White, wealthy motion picture producer, she has been, she says, "sick at heart."

Once trustful of her fellow beings, Ann Luther, wife of Ed Gallagher of Gallagher and Shean, has turned against the world in bitterness. Yet, in her breast burns the desire to have the truth set her right before the world, and it is her story of tragedy and battle that she reveals today for the first time to GRAPHIC readers.

In second place upon this page was an article about the Prince of Wales whose picture was shown above the caption "Boy! What a Look!" The story was entitled PRINCE TELLS ME JUST WHY IT IS HE'S SO SAD and was written by a "Society Leader" who was too distinguished to reveal her identity. A minor item about a shady deal was headlined:

Our Subway Girl Will Pay Cash for Politeness on Trains

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

NEW YORK EVENING GRAPHIC

NIGHT EDITION

Vol. 1, No. 4 NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 18, 1924 PAGES 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

Boys Foil Death Chair

Mothers Weep as Governor Halts Execution

Out From the SHADOW OF DEATH

Would Have Kicked Off With Grin

First Story From Two Saved by "A" Smith

Bearded after many heavy-bearded men in the gloom of Sing Sing's death house to forfeit their lives in the electric chair tonight, two youths convicted of murder were snatched back from the brink of eternity by a Governor's mercy today.

The death sentences of "Red" and "Black" were commuted to life imprisonment by Gov. Smith to meet an appeal for clemency which was filed by the mothers of the two boys.

The boys were arrested in 1921 for the murder of a woman in New York City. They were sentenced to death in 1923.

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"I'm Guilty," said Marion, "Only God and Me Can Understand." Perhaps Now We'll Make the World, Too, Understand

Cried for Joy at News from Sing Sing

Mr. Cook Schaub

The boys were arrested in 1921 for the murder of a woman in New York City. They were sentenced to death in 1923.



Francis Marion

Francis Marion

The boys were arrested in 1921 for the murder of a woman in New York City. They were sentenced to death in 1923.

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ALWAYS COUNT UP CHANGE!
HE DIDN'T AND SUIT
FOR \$246 COST \$350

This was told by Frank Horen to whom it had happened. The fifth column announced BROADWAY GOLD PAVED FOR WALTER WINCHELL and disclosed that the former reporter on *Vaudeville News* was now drama editor of the *Graphic* which would enjoy his intimate knowledge of the Main Stem.

A "Daily Photo-Drama from Life" topped page three, its pictures telling how RADIO SONG OPENS GATES OF PRISON TO CONVICT. The rest of the page was given over to a singular contest called "Miss Courtesy." In an effort to promote a return of chivalry, the *Graphic* announced that it would give money prizes to men who gave their seats in the subway to a Miss Courtesy who would be sent about for that purpose by the paper. To save *Graphic* readers the annoyance of relinquishing their places to just any female, there was added a large picture of Miss Courtesy—in a bathing suit.

Most of the news items were written by participants or observers and one searched in vain for the news carried by other papers of the day. After page six the paper gave way to features and special articles such as NO ONE KNOWS BUT GOD AND MYSELF, told presumably by the latter and the astounding disclosure

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by "a husband," IF MY WIFE COMES BACK I'LL BE HAPPY. STILLMANS RULED OUT OF BLUE BOOK was revealed by Alma Sioux Semberry "who sits in the seat of the high and mighty, wields the scepter of decision over society and decides whose name shall cross the threshold of that maker and breaker of folks socially—namely, 'The Blue Book.' "

The day's big contest was an outgrowth of Macfadden's theories on genetics. Ten thousand dollars were to be awarded for "ideal marriages" compounded by "Dianas" and "Apollos" selected by the paper. Aspirants were to fill out physical measurement blanks and send in a bathing suit photograph. The sub-headline ran :

GRAPHIC SEEKING TWENTY AMERICAN APOLLOS
AND DIANAS, LAUNCHES NATION-WIDE MOVE
TO ENCOURAGE WEDDING OF PHYSICALLY
FIT: IDEA WINS SPONTANEOUS ENCOUR-
AGEMENT OF CLERGY.

In 1921 the *Daily News* had conducted an "Apollo" contest but it had nothing like the scope of this affair. The *News* had not even mentioned marriage.

Fiction included a serial, THE ROMANCE OF AN ARTIST'S MODEL which was illustrated by a large romantic picture of the *True Story* type with the caption: "He Pressed Me Tightly Against Him So That I Could Feel The Trembling of His Heartbeats."

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Theater news under Winchell's direction filled two pages and then came Macfadden's own physical culture department. The day's specialties were essays on RUINED WOMAN IS HERITAGE OF DARK AGES, LIFE AND HEALTH ARE BASED ON CHEMISTRY and "Paul with a Past—a double diary of Married Life." Sports and classified ads filled the rest of the paper's thirty-two pages.

This unique journal was the result of a combination of several extraordinary talents in addition to the genius of Mr. Macfadden. Emile Gauvreau, the managing editor, had previously been in charge of the *Hartford Courant*. He had introduced into the columns of this staid old journal a modernistic note which did not meet with the approval of the publisher. When Macfadden put him in control of the *Graphic* he had complete freedom for experimenting with his liberated journalistic ideas. The feature editor, Joseph Applegate, was a master in designing sensational layouts and dressing up confession stories in colorful garb. His best outlet was the Saturday magazine and rotogravure section which became something of a wonder in this already dramatic field. Here are the contents of a typical issue:

I MARRIED KID McCOY THREE TIMES BECAUSE
HE WAS GENTLE AND KIND—Julia Wheelock

STICK TO WOMEN—THEY'RE SAFER THAN
HORSES—George White

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MY LIFE AS MARTA FARA, STRONG WOMAN,
WAS FAKE—Marta Fara

I DID NOT MARRY MY BROTHER—Elizabeth Dart

PHYSICAL CULTURE GAVE ME BEAUTY—Dorothy
Knapp.

These articles were decorated with vivid pictures and illustrations. An average rotogravure section contained about eighteen pictures of which fifteen were females in undress.

The *Graphic* became more audacious but its formula never changed. As frequently as possible the news was written by the participants, or at least under their names. Even movie reviews were done by the readers. Serious, non-sensational news was rarely featured if there was the slightest suggestion of a crime or sex story. Pictures always formed the backbone of the paper and all but a few pages were devoted to features and fiction.

Attempting to undertake a sober analysis of the *Graphic* is about as easy as making a statistical study of the character of the modern burlesque show—both were distinguished by a variation of the strip-tease. But, lest it be assumed that the selections quoted above tell only part of the story, it is well to glance at a few more issues.

Running quickly through the first few months, we find that the featured stories fall into several types of which these headlines are illustrative:

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I AM NOW THE MOTHER OF MY SISTER'S SON
I STARTED AS NEWSBOY SAYS HEAD OF BANK
HE BEAT ME—I LOVE HIM.

RUDY ASKS \$1,433,000 FOR KISSES

HAPPINESS MEANS MORE TO ME THAN MONEY

Poor Boy, 19

When Rich Killers

Facing Noose Cries MUST I DIE Get Life

MY BACK WAS BROKEN BUT I KEPT ON LAUGH-
ING

LOVE'S LURE LEADS LAD TO GATES OF DEATH

THOUSANDS APPLAUD WHILE WOMAN IS TOR-
TURED FOR AMUSEMENT

FOR 36 HOURS I LIVED ANOTHER WOMAN'S
LOVE LIFE

DANCER'S HEART BROKEN

This story leads off with the words, "Oh, if only my mother had told me the great truths of sex and if there had been a baby, it might have been different."

Each day there was a "Photo-Drama From Real Life," picturing such events as LOVER SLASHES SWEETHEART WHO SPURNS HIM. Fiction was almost entirely of the confessional type and was always illustrated with vivid action shots of amorous or murderous activities. Macfadden's special interest in physical culture lapped over into the fiction department in such stories as MY VICTORY OVER DOPE

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and into the comic strip—"Lottie Pep" whose pneumatic figure was shown each day in brief costume as she went about her healthgiving adventures. Among the numerous contests run in these early days was every type of competition imaginable, but the *Graphic* seemed to prefer the kind which allowed it to print female pictures. To supplement the Diana-Apollo tourney it conducted a survey to find "The Most Beautiful Secretary in New York." Rarely did the *Graphic* bother with happenings in the literary world but when Elinor Glyn published her *Philosophy of Love* the news claimed a full page with the familiar headline, THE MOST DARING BOOK EVER WRITTEN.

On weekdays the *Graphic* was somewhat limited by the necessity of covering the day's news. On Saturday it really let loose. A typical week-end magazine section offered:

I AM A MERRY GOLD DIGGER—I TAKE BUT I
DON'T PAY

I MAKE UGLY DUCKLINGS SWANS

I GAVE UP BEING PATERSON'S BECAUSE I LOVED
MY CHILDREN

I FOUND LOVE IN WEBSTER

I DANCED AND MY DAUGHTER PAID THE FID-
DLER—MY SIN WAS VISITED UPON MY CHILD'S
HEAD

I MARRIED A SHOW GIRL

NOTHING
BUT THE
TRUTH

NEW YORK EVENING GRAPHIC

NIGHT
EDITION

Vol. 1 No. 64 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1924

QUITS SCREEN TO LOVE BABY



LOVE WON OVER AMBITION when Luetitia Joy, movie star, announced she had given up her career at the height of her fame and would retire from the movies to devote the rest of her life to her daughter, now three months old. "Fame is futile," she said. "I was looking for happiness and never found it. But I hope to find it with Baby Beatrice." Miss Joy divorced her husband, John Gilbert, an actor, a few days before the baby was born on grounds of desertion and cruelty. She says she has found fame empty and futile.

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If the accompanying articles rarely lived up to the thrilling promise of their headlines, the pictures amply balanced the sensation budget.

The issue of March 2, 1925 had approximately 1568 inches of available space; 200 were given to advertisements and 175 to news comment. The rest was all features, fiction and pictures. So rich were the day's offerings that the front page needed three big headlines:

MILLIONAIRE TRIED AS SLAYER

SMOTHERS DANCE HALL LOVE

FUROR OVER ANTI-PRUDE SCHOOL

The first two are self-explanatory but the third might stand some elucidation. A small article on page three revealed that a school in Suffolk, England, allowed its co-educational student body to play in the nude on warm days. The scholars were all pre-adolescent and the "Furor" would seem to have been confined to the *Graphic*.

The day's editorial told HOW FAITH RAISED A PAUPER TO A MILLIONAIRE, a theme second only to eugenic weddings in Macfadden's estimation. Winchell's column, "Your Broadway and Mine," had blossomed into a major attraction with its inside tidbits related in the master's increasingly amazing argot. At first, Winchell had been addicted to such titles as

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“The Verse Is Yet To Come” but his imagination was developing.

For the *Graphic*, as for the *Daily News*, 1926 was a banner year. The thrilling sensations which we have seen in the *News* were handled with even greater excitement by the *Graphic*. These lurid stories were covered in full by all daily newspapers but their treatment in the *Graphic* was unique. Respectable newspapers reported 1926's crime and sex stories thoroughly but their approach was tinged with a degree of restraint and, on occasion, their editorial columns expressed distaste for the items which devotion to the news “forced” them to narrate in their news columns. Tabloids like the *Daily News* reported the sensations in less self-conscious fashion. The *Graphic* entered the circus with unequalled fervor and enterprise.

So great was the *Graphic's* enthusiasm that ordinary journalistic tools proved inadequate. The paper had developed a highly colorful style of writing and an ingenious camera department but neither words nor pictures were sufficient to portray the thrilling things that were happening. When the Halls-Mills case broke, Macfadden hired Aimee Semple McPherson to cover it in her evangelical style, but this was not the answer. The *Graphic* met the challenge by developing its most noted device, the composograph.

Apparently it came about in this fashion: As we have already seen, the Kip Rhineland divorce suit in the spring of 1936 developed into an exceedingly

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titillating story. The wealthy playboy was suing his wife for divorce on the grounds that she had not told him that colored blood ran in her veins. In defense, she contended that it had always been perfectly obvious that she was not pure White. To prove this, she arranged to reveal herself to the Court so that it could be seen that her Negroid characteristics must have been evident from the start. What a story! What a picture! Alas, the Court was cleared and the eager photographers were prevented from conveying the thrilling scene to their readers.

But the *Graphic* realized that the issue was of such importance as to demand extraordinary methods. The art department rose to the occasion. A girl was stripped to the waist and posed in a group so as to duplicate the scene in court. The picture was then retouched to look as if it had actually been taken on the spot and the *Graphic's* front page had a scoop. Except for an almost invisible note at the bottom of the page the picture appeared genuine. Circulation jumped considerably.

During the remainder of its career the *Graphic* made increasingly promiscuous use of the composograph. One had to look with great care to discover whether pictures were genuine or posed fakes, and at times the two were so combined that it was almost impossible to tell where truth stopped and art began. Probably no story was as productive of composograph masterpieces as the Browning-Peaches epic which the *Graphic* appropriated as its very own. This story was

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the perfect Macfadden yarn—poor working girl marries wealthy middle-aged magnate whose passion for publicity makes their private life completely public.

Peaches' "private diary" was serialized and countless intimate pictures were printed. Among the numerous composographs were several of the *Graphic's* outstanding achievements in this line. Daddy and Peaches were shown playing "doggies" in their boudoir under the headline, WOOF, WOOF I'M A GOOF. Daddy was persuaded to adopt an "African honking gander" as a pet and was pictured leading the bizarre animal about New York. The picture was captioned HONK, HONK IT'S THE BONK.

The composograph was assaulted as a new horror, but the device was actually ancient. It had been used by the old *New York Graphic* in the 1870's and at some time or other by many newspapers. In 1925, as we saw, the *Daily News* used it to dramatize the slight earthquake which occurred on March first. But, previous to the *Graphic*, it had been employed sparingly and usually with clear mention of its origin. The *Graphic* applied it to everything and the accompanying notation was frequently so concealed as to make it seem an actual photograph. As a misleading form of reporting it probably cannot be beaten.

Even with the aid of the camera's tricks, the *Graphic* found ordinary news sources inadequate and at times adopted the ancient strategem of fabricating stories. An

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interesting example was related in the *American Mercury* by John Spivak, a former reporter on the *Graphic* staff who has composed a vivid description of the inner workings of the madhouse. According to Spivak, Fulton Oursler, guardian of Macfadden's publications, was displeased by the lack of circulation. He ordered a greater amount of "romance" and Spivak was sent out to get it. In the previous day's *Journal*, he relates, there had been a small item about a young man who had committed suicide in a rooming house in Newark, New Jersey. The case had attracted a little attention because the youth had carefully destroyed all clues to his identity.

By chance, Spivak met Norman Carroll, brother of the theatrical producer and business manager of his shows. Carroll wanted publicity and Spivak wanted "romance" so they concocted a yarn. A chorus girl from the "Vanities" was ordered to remain in hiding until further notice and the *Graphic* gave its front page to a story which started with these words:

Possessed by a mad and hopeless love for a young and beautiful Broadway dancer who extended him many kindnesses but rejected his frenzied wooing, an unidentified young poet ended his life yesterday by inhaling gas. . . . In a farewell letter to Clay Long, 152 East 92 Street, signed "E," he disclosed his infatuation for the charming 23-year-old member of Earl Carroll's "Vanities." Because of her coldness, the letter said, he had decided to "Cash in his chips on this merry little game of life and love."

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Here, in a nutshell, is the *Graphic* formula—death, beauty, sex and mystery. In comparison with these virtues, truth, of course, is hardly worth mentioning. So frequently did the *Graphic* indulge in this form of exaggeration that it eventually became involved in a web of lawsuits. Perhaps the most spectacular of these was that concerning the Atlantic City Beauty Contest, also related by Spivak.

Somebody had discovered that a bathing beauty contest at Coney Island was crooked. In its excitement, the *Graphic* decided that the whole bathing beauty situation was a racket and headlined its story, BEAUTY CONTEST EXPOSED, FRAME UP IN ATLANTIC CITY. The article revealed nothing to support this damaging assertion and within a short time the *Graphic* was being sued for \$4,000,000 by Atlantic City officials. But, naturally, the exposé did wonders for circulation.

The chaos which pervaded the entire organization can be inferred from another story told by Spivak. Persuaded by Carlo Tresca, the perennial radical, that two Italians named Greco and Carillo were innocent of the murder charges against them, the *Graphic* took up their cause. When they were acquitted the paper attempted to signalize its triumph by giving them the front page spread. In the confusion, the picture of Leo Carillo, the actor, was substituted for that of Carillo the acquitted. The resulting disturbance can be under-

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stood when it is noted that Mr. Carillo's picture was accompanied by the headline,

SAVED FROM ELECTRIC CHAIR

The *Graphic's* eccentric news gathering attracted readers, but it was the features that kept them. In addition to the standard tabloid items, the *Graphic* ran numerous specialties with the characteristic Macfadden touch. Physical culture topics appealing to the universal desire for beauty, strength and personal magnetism were generously exploited. Fiction in the highly popular *True Story* manner ran daily. Special articles of the lurid kind which had formerly been restricted largely to Sunday supplements were offered each day. Every imaginable kind of special service and contest was tried.

Many popular newspapers had already capitalized upon the tragedy of the lovelorn but the *Graphic* went one step further. Not only did it give advice, it also proceeded to solve the problem through its "Lonely Hearts" department. Lonesome girls were enabled to meet equally lonesome boys, meetings were held, dances were conducted and "Lonely Hearts" strove mightily that all might have Love.

To supplement the usual line of contests, the *Graphic* ran several extraordinary competitions. Their theme is suggested by the Diana-Apollo affair with which

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the paper started its hectic career. For three months there was a steady stream of bathing suit pictures until it seemed that nobody in New York who owned a bathing suit had been ignored. In November the contest ended. Dianas and Apollos were selected but research fails to uncover any announcement of the money-awards. It seems that the Dianas and Apollos could not be persuaded to mate.

In line with the Macfadden "improve yourself" policy, the *Graphic* ran many special articles advising readers how to do everything from tying a bow-tie to breaking dope habits. Daily contributions were made by the most fantastic persons ever to get a by-line in a newspaper—criminals, wife-beaters, divorcees, drunkards, athletes, dope-addicts, obscure inventors, vagabonds, industrial magnates, amateur evangelists, actresses, and so forth. The story was always the same. The successful told how virtue had led them to fame and fortune; the transgressors (failure occurs only through sin) revealed the causes of their sins and told how they might be cured. Thus did the *Graphic* fulfill its promise, "if you read the GRAPHIC with sufficient regularity you can be assured of worthwhile assistance."

When the depression arrived, the *Graphic* had a circulation of 350,000 and right through the sober tragedy of the Crash it continued to play its strident tune. The topics which were beginning to dominate American life—unemployment, poverty and distress

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—were not allowed to tarnish its pages. Instead, the headlines continued to run :

PARENTS FLEETING LOVE TRYSTS HURT
CHILDREN MORE TODAY THAN IN PAST
NIGHT CLUB GIGOLOS FORMING UNION
TO PROTECT BEAUTIES WHO HIRE THEM
SOCIETY GIRLS CRAVING FOR THRILLS
DRIVES THEM INTO VARIED VENTURES

The *Graphic* remained true to one aim—circulation. It is possible that Macfadden truly believes that abnormality and frustration can be cured and the world set aright by continuous applications of nude pictures, articles on every printable form of crime and horror and general exposure of what was formerly known as the private life. But the most kindly disposed critic would be hard put to credit the *Graphic* with purposes other than the acquisition of circulation. No stone was left unturned in ferreting out material appealing to what are popularly called the “baser instincts.” No visible attempt was made to present a serious view of the news. All energies were devoted to the search for sensations and every restraint still common to daily journalism was thrown overboard.

For a number of years the *Graphic's* gay abandon attracted a large number of readers but collapse was inevitable. The enterprise was too chaotic to last. Potential advertisers were antagonized by the paper's

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intemperate manners and it never enjoyed the amount of revenue to which its circulation would otherwise have entitled it. And after 1930 circulation itself began to decline.

This was probably the result of several causes. The *Graphic's* popularity rested upon its ability to stir up excitement and thrill the senses. The possibilities in this field are limited and eventually the imagination of any one organization must suffer exhaustion. Furthermore, there is good reason for believing that the public appetite for extreme sensationalism, great as it is, has a point of satiety which cannot be postponed indefinitely. Even the most skillful pornography palls. The periodic ebb and flow of sensational journalism through the years gives this belief the support of historical repetition.

Probably the most significant factor in killing the *Graphic* was the change in spirit brought about by the depression. With the coming of economic distress, the carefree spirit of the twenties was supplanted by a widespread interest in serious matters. Political events assumed an immediate importance in everyday life and the headlong rush for amusement gave way to a troubled concern over economic problems. Daddy Browning, Ruth Snyder and Peggy Joyce were displaced by labor relations, wages, taxation, etc., as issues of the day. The *Graphic* became an anachronism.

Moderate tabloids like the *New York Daily News* reflected the changing climate of opinion by adopting

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more thoughtful ways. The search for thrills gave way to an increasing devotion to serious news reporting and interpretation. For the Macfadden tabloid such a development was congenitally impossible. It had been predicated upon principles which were fundamentally inappropriate to daily journalism. In magazine form (*True Story*, *True Romances*, *True Experiences*, *True Detective Mysteries*, *Liberty*, *Physical Culture*, etc.) they have enjoyed continued success but the strain of stretching them to cover the requirements of daily publication was too great. In May, 1932, Macfadden withdrew his financial support and the *Graphic* ceased to be.

Although the *Graphic* was never properly a newspaper, it has considerable significance for the tabloid story. Its effect upon the tabloid and, indirectly upon American journalism in general, is not susceptible to mathematical evaluation but its reality cannot be denied. The competition among newspapers is so keen that they cannot resist the temptation to mimic the successful innovations of a rival. In its heyday, the *Graphic's* despised sensationalism forced competing papers to adopt a louder tone. They printed more suggestive pictures, their headlines became more exaggerated, their writing displayed more color, their tendency toward excitement increased. And, just as the *Graphic* was more a magazine than a newspaper, its influence is shown most clearly by developments in the magazine field.

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With the exception of a few periodicals of limited circulation and intellectual aims, almost every prominent magazine today bases its appeal on the interest-arousing power of pictures. Their covers are uniformly devoted to reproductions of the female face or form and their contents are selected with an eye to illustration possibilities. This tendency was, of course, well under way before the appearance of the *Graphic* but its development was undoubtedly hastened by the *Graphic's* roaring success.

No recent development in the magazine field is more outstanding than the tremendous growth of the picture magazines and here the *Graphic* influence is explicit. In the manner it developed, these magazines search the news for sensational items which are covered by dramatic pictures and frequent use of composographs. The *Graphic* formula has proven the most popular magazine discovery in years.

But the *Graphic's* greatest significance lies in its reflection of the peculiar atmosphere which pervaded urban America during the post-War boom years. If the paper had lived for only a short time and had attracted only a small following, it might be passed off as a meaningless accident. But the *Graphic* flourished for almost a decade and attained a circulation exceeded by only a few newspapers in the United States. Furthermore, the peculiar qualities of the paper harmonized with other clamorous manifestations characteristic of the period. Its extreme sensationalism, its

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concentration on amusement and excitement and its complete disregard of serious issues were facets of an attitude which stamped itself on many features of American life during the twenties. They were less the result of a publisher's whim than a consistent, if somewhat extreme part of a larger pattern—the crazy-quilt of post-War America.

A GLANCE BACKWARD



THE death of the *Graphic* marked the end of the tabloid's experimental period. Within less than thirteen years after its first appearance in America, the new journalism had weathered every test of location and purpose. All over the country, in half a hundred cities varying in size and character from New York to Mount Pleasant, Texas, tabloids had found appreciative audiences. The tabloid formula had proven sufficiently elastic to cover the entire range of journalistic behavior from earnest solemnity to uproarious abandon and examples of each type had achieved a measure of success. In little more than a decade, the tabloid had advanced from the tentative position of an experiment to an established place in American life.

After 1932 the tabloid story becomes inextricably woven into the confusing pattern of current events. Perspective is difficult to maintain and events resist inclusion in any clearly marked channels. Before attempting to watch the recent developments it may be well to pause for a backward glance.

The American tabloid which appeared in 1919 did not spring fullborn from the imagination of Joseph

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Patterson or any other journalistic pioneer. Despite the general feeling that the *Daily News* represented a wholly new (and deplorable) departure, it was actually the natural result of a long journalistic development which in turn was influenced by the sweep of social and economic forces.

↪ Turning back to the 1830's, we have seen the advent of sensational, popular papers which resembled the tabloid in brevity, dramatic emphasis of lurid events and general intent to amuse. This penny press was regarded in its day with the same scorn that greeted the tabloid, and like the tabloid, it enjoyed great popular support. But, these colorful newspapers were unable to preserve their power. As the nation became involved in preparations for civil war they disappeared or adopted more respectable habits.

Liberated by the triumph of the North, industrial change swept the country into new ways of living. Population soared, elementary education spread, cities rose, mechanical inventions multiplied and the triumph of big business was complete. Compelled to produce greater profits to meet rising production costs, the newspaper adopted the mentality and the practices of large-scale industry. Circulation became the major aim. Editorial policies were subordinated to financial factors which dictated that methods be altered so as to interest an increasing number of people. Economically, socially and psychologically, the time cried for a new style of popular journalism.

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During the 1880's Joseph Pulitzer evolved the newspaper's response to the changed pattern of American life. He utilized all the new mechanical devices and made innovations in the physical make-up of the daily paper but at bottom his technique was little more than a rearrangement of venerable newspaper methods fused in such a fashion as to fit the needs of the urban masses. He combined the sensational tactics of the penny press with the vigorous editorial partisanship of the party papers and added a generous coating of popular entertainment. The newspaper lost its cold formality and moved into more intimate contact with the people.

A short while later, Hearst challenged Pulitzer's control and in the ensuing battle popular journalism took another step toward the tabloid. Since their primary concern was the acquisition of circulation, the two rival publishers concentrated on what has been called "ballyhoo." They applied the circus technique to the daily newspaper. The news was dramatized in the fashion of the "Greatest Show On Earth" and was supplemented by a variety of side-shows appealing to every imaginable type of curiosity. In the manner of the circus poster, the most sensational offerings were featured and the whole was dressed up in eye-catching clothes. Outraged respectable elements in the community labeled the new style "yellow" but the people to whom it was addressed liked it. Ultimately, many of

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its methods were absorbed by the daily press at large.

The several early attempts at setting up tabloids in the United States were either premature or badly managed. In England, shortly after the opening of the twentieth century, Alfred Harmsworth sketched plans for a new, modernized form of popular newspaper—small in size, bright in manner, filled with pictures and thoroughly up-to-date in every respect. Within a short while it attracted the largest following of any newspaper in the world.

Joseph Patterson's *New York Illustrated Daily News* was an outright imitation of the already successful English tabloid. The chief distinguishing marks of this paper (reduced size, pictures, play-up of one story, condensed writing, surplus of features and a candid attempt to interest common people) were all within the natural course of development of American journalism but it looked new and seemed to violate tradition. Accordingly, it was labeled a fad and even such experts as Hearst gave it little chance of survival.

Tracing the history of the *News*, we saw it develop from a rather colorless little picture paper into a blaring trumpet of sensation and amusement during the height of the jazz years. This tendency, we observed, was entirely in sympathy with the spirit of the time and was shared by even the most respectable members of the press. Although the *News* had placed its emphasis upon the melodramatic and the entertaining, it was

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nevertheless developing its skill in photographic reporting and in presenting condensed accounts of the news.

In the meanwhile, a host of tabloids was arising in the wake of Patterson's success. Most of these papers were complete imitations of the *Daily News* and varied from its pattern only in minor details. Although this type of tabloid achieved the greatest popularity, there were significant ventures in applying tabloid methods to other purposes. On the conservative wing were several non-sensational tabloids which sought to combine the advantages of the new style with the virtues of the old. As a class, these were only moderately successful but a few of them achieved permanence and indicated the line of development for the future. There were also tabloids of extremely sensational character which attracted large circulation but abandoned themselves so thoroughly to lurid excitement that when the depression arrived they were unable to sober up and were forced out of existence.

By 1932, the tabloid had become an accepted part of the American press. For corroboration of this we need only glance at the currents of public attitude toward the tabloid as they reflected themselves in the periodicals and other expressions of contemporary feeling. When the *News* first appeared it was judged experimental, unlikely to last. The subject was apparently not deemed of sufficient importance to stimulate much thought one way or another. One searches the periodi-

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cals of the early twenties in vain for any mention of the tabloid's arrival. A few years later the same magazines suddenly broke out into great excitement. The general attitude was one of surprise and relatively objective description. "Tabloid a Day," said *Forum*. "The Tabloids," repeated the *Mercury*. "Journalistic Jazz," commented the *Nation*. The tabloid had been discovered but it was still a phenomenon.

As people examined the new papers they began to feel that perhaps this was more than a passing fancy. The more they thought about it, the more they realized the proportions of its popularity. Discovery gave way to excited concern. Along with Communism, the Japanese people and other threats to American security, the tabloid became a Menace. "Those Terrible Tabloids," shouted the *Independent*, they are "baudy, inane, contemptible." "Tabloid Poison," exclaimed the *Saturday Review of Literature* and asked, "What will the grandchildren of the tabloid readers be like?" The irresistible answer was, ". . . in emotion, ideals, intelligence, either wrought into fantastic shapes or burnt out altogether. Soiled minds, rotten before they are ripe."

The campaign reached its climax when *Forum* printed a debate between Oswald Garrison Villard and Martin Weyrauch, assistant editor of the *Graphic*, on the topic, "Are Tabloid Newspapers A Menace?" In addition to their magazine articles Villard and Weyrauch battled it out in public debate in the Community

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Church, taking opposition sides of the question, "Is The Tabloid A Harmful Influence In America?" It is evident that most right-thinking citizens agreed with Villard in labeling the tabloid wholly bad and a dire Menace.

This feeling was not limited to moralists like Villard nor to elevated journals like the *Saturday Review*. As we saw in the opening chapter, most persons who expressed themselves on the subject at this time felt that the tabloid was a dangerous, deplorable innovation. This crusade against the tabloid bore close resemblance to similar attacks upon the motion picture, the automobile, the telephone, the radio and indeed every new development which violated tradition.

The movies were attacked as a vulgar form of entertainment laden with danger to our morals and the security of our homes. The telephone was assaulted as an invasion of privacy. The automobile was a menace to peace and safety. In each case, society reacted in defense of the accepted order and pointed to the innovation as immoral, contrary to the evident wishes of God and certain to bring a long train of horror and misfortune.

Similarly, at this stage in its career, the tabloid was not discussed in factual manner but was regarded with much emotion as a Satanic evil. Few people bothered to point out that, good or bad, it was a natural development thoroughly in accord with organic trends in journalism and in American life. Viewed with less moral

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indignation and more perception, the tabloid would have been seen as a practical response to the social need for a simplified, popularized form of daily newspaper. The extent to which it filled that need is shown by the rapidity with which millions of readers flocked to its support. But, these points were wholly ignored by the articulate members of the community who expressed themselves on the subject. As Thurman Arnold points out in his brilliant examination of social thinking, *The Folklore of Capitalism*, new organizations are commonly judged not by the extent to which they satisfy social needs but by the degree to which they accord with traditional ways of thinking. When the tabloid appeared to throw journalistic tradition to the winds by addressing itself frankly to the tastes of the urban masses, it was evaluated not according to what it actually did but according to contemporary notions of what a daily newspaper should do. Needless to say, the standards upon which Villard and the other critics based their attack would have been satisfied by no popular newspaper of the time.

A few years later, the periodicals no longer showed any discussion of the subject. The emotional force of the opposition had been spent and the tabloid had continued to entrench itself in the habits of American life. Although the question was no longer argued publicly, it is a matter of common observation that the tabloid was still considered by respectable people to be a vulgar form of journalism. Contemporary literature had

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established one of its stock symbols of modern vulgarity in the "gazette reader" who was conventionally pictured as a "gum-chewing" semi-cretin. Students in New York City public schools were still subjected to regular warnings of the pitfalls that awaited the tabloid addict. The effect of the sermon was, perhaps, not increased when they were conducted on awe-inspiring trips through the many educational features of the *Daily News* building but they were already accustomed to the amusing sight of self-conscious elders in the subway surreptitiously consuming a tabloid behind the respectable curtain of the *Times* or the *Tribune*. Such vestiges of prejudice remained but by 1932 the tabloid had certainly become an established part of American daily journalism, dignified by thorough files in public libraries and serious study in schools of journalism.

It is a fairly common observation that the action of social dynamics manifests itself in two directions as the community reacts to the appearance of new organizations or new forms of expression which fill practical needs but violate popular ideals. On the one hand, the community resolves its conflict between utility and sentiment by converting its original hostility into rationalized acceptance. And on the other hand, the new institution tends to minimize its novelty by adopting more familiar manners and behaving in more conventional fashion. In other words, public attitudes, however unreal they may be, tend to warp institutions to

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fit their reputations, just as enduring institutions tend to change public attitudes. A vivid example of this reciprocal action is found in the metamorphosis of the motion picture.

In its early days the movie was regarded as a vulgar, dangerous innovation. At this time the movie actually was melodramatic, sensational and cheap by comparison with more venerable forms of expression but, since it filled a real social need, it soon became entrenched in popular habits. As the community grew accustomed to the cinema, its attitude of scorn changed to one of acceptance and we are now witnessing its development into one of respect. Large parts of the intellectual population are coming to regard the movie as an art.

As public feeling toward the movie changed, the movie itself changed. It began to take itself seriously and in the last few years it has become increasingly worthy of being called an art. This is not to say that the motion picture matured simply because public opinion changed but the two processes were intimately related. If the intellectual and creative members of the community had not changed their attitude toward the motion picture it would have possessed neither the talents nor the audience necessary for its metamorphosis into a higher form of expression.

It may seem somewhat exaggerated to extend this analogy to the tabloid for the tabloid has yet to advance into the class of art but the comparison is com-

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pletely valid insofar as the tabloid has developed. We have observed the change in public attitude from antagonism to acceptance. In a previous chapter we noted the post-depression change of the *Daily News* into a more respectable and less sensational paper. We have also seen the disappearance of the extremely abandoned *Graphic* type of tabloid. As the community accepted it, the tabloid became in fact as well as in reputation more conventional in tone and content. There were, of course, other factors which caused the tabloid to moderate its ways but the change in public feeling must be numbered among them.

In the years since 1932, tabloids have assumed a place of increasing importance in the American press. Their circulation has continued to grow and, as we shall see in a later chapter, their methods have been copied on an increasing scale. But, the course of development has been wholly along the lines already observed.

The extremely sensational tabloid has disappeared. Moderate papers like the *New York Daily News* and the *Chicago Times* have turned increasingly toward serious matters, giving greater space to important news and including additional amounts of intelligent feature material. Imitative papers like the *Mirror*, the *Boston Record*, the *Philadelphia News* and the *New Orleans Tribune* have continued to pursue their mediocre ways, bent primarily upon entertainment. Clean tabloids such as the *Los Angeles Daily News* and the

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Washington News have acquired slight increases in circulation. The American tabloid press today includes about fifty newspapers widely varying in character and with a combined circulation of more than three and one-half million each day and almost twice that on Sundays.

So much for the historical part of the story. But before we can assume the mantle of judgment we must try to answer one important question, Who reads the tabloids?

WHO READS THE TABLOIDS?



IN ATTEMPTING to find who actually reads the tabloids one is limited by several preliminary obstacles. In the first place, there is the ever-present matter of prejudice. Public opinion during the twenties was almost unanimous in labeling the tabloid an inferior, vulgar form of newspaper. In similar fashion, learned opinion was agreed that the tabloid was read exclusively by an ill-educated, lower class section of the urban populace plus a few backsliders who should know better. This judgment was and probably still is widely accepted as true. It is not borne out by the figures.

There lies the second obstacle, the figures. Statistics offer the only possible approach to an accurate portrait of the tabloid reader and, as yet, complete figures are not available. The scientific study of reading habits is a comparatively recent development. Most of the information assembled so far has been gathered by advertising people who are naturally concerned primarily with commercial implications. As a result, the various kinds of data necessary to a well-rounded picture are not at hand. There are, however, several sets of figures which get at the tabloid reader from various

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angles and make it possible to form a fairly complete outline of his features.

To study each city which has had a tabloid would involve unnecessary detail and needless repetition. Since other phases of the story have shown New York to be typical of the scene elsewhere, it will be sufficient to concentrate on that city and then compare the results with observations from other localities. First, the question of origin. Where did tabloid readers come from?

In 1919, before the appearance of the tabloid, there were six important morning newspapers in New York—the *American*, the *Times*, the *Tribune*, the *World*, the *Herald* and the *Morning Sun*—with a combined daily circulation of 1,414,776. By 1937, the number had been reduced to four, but the combined circulation had risen to 3,289,176. The two remaining large-size newspapers—the *Times* and the *Herald Tribune*—accounted for 866,973. The tabloids—*Daily News* and *Mirror* claimed the preponderant figure of 2,422,203. Thus, the large-size morning papers had lost 547,803 readers, presumably to the tabloids.

A second source of tabloid readership is found among the former devotees of large-size evening papers whose combined circulation had declined from 1,777,226 in 1919 to 1,596,439 in 1938—a loss of 180,787. Both tabloids issued special editions which came upon the street early in the evening and cut into the monopoly of the traditional afternoon press. But,

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still we have accounted for only 728,590 tabloid readers against a total of 2,422,203.

Perhaps the greatest proportion of the tabloid audience was culled from new additions to the newspaper reading public provided by population increase. During the period 1919 to 1937 the population of New York City rose from 5,620,048 to 7,363,624 and the suburbs gained 1,246,079 making a total growth of 2,989,655. Further additions to the local newspaper following were derived from the considerable increase in New York City's transient population as Manhattan became a national business center and large organizations concentrated upon the small island. There is no way of telling how many of the new New Yorkers were newspaper readers but it is obvious that the number must have been large. Since the circulation of the large-size papers had declined, the new readers—resident and transient—must have adhered, in large part to the tabloids.

Although there are no figures to substantiate this contention, it is a matter of observation that a good portion of the tabloid circulation was acquired by persuading women to read a daily newspaper. One has only to glance about in the subway to appreciate the tabloid's popularity on the distaff side. With its numerous domestic features, "sob" stories, romantic fiction, contests and general emphasis of the feminine angle, the new journalistic style evoked much greater

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appreciation from women than the large-size papers had enjoyed.

It has generally been accepted as a fact that many tabloid readers were former adherents of foreign language dailies, but the actual figure cannot be great. In 1937 the combined circulation of all foreign language dailies in New York was 826,100. Since this represented an increase of several thousands over the 1919 total, it has little claim as a source of tabloid readership. Even if every person who bought a foreign language paper also purchased a tabloid there would still be over 1,500,000 readers unaccounted for.

The conclusion must be that the tabloid acquired its audience from people who had formerly read large-size papers—morning and evening—from new women readers and from the normal increase in population. This, of course, is only an approach to the problem. It suggests that tabloid readers came from all strata of society but it establishes little as to their position in the community. It shows simply that the new journalism had induced several million persons to join the newspaper reading public. For a description of these people we must follow the tabloid delivery trucks on their rounds and see where the papers actually go.

Let us examine the distribution of morning newspapers in the five boroughs of New York City on an average day in 1937. In order to gain a picture of circulation in relation to economic classes, the city's population is divided into three groups. The lower class is

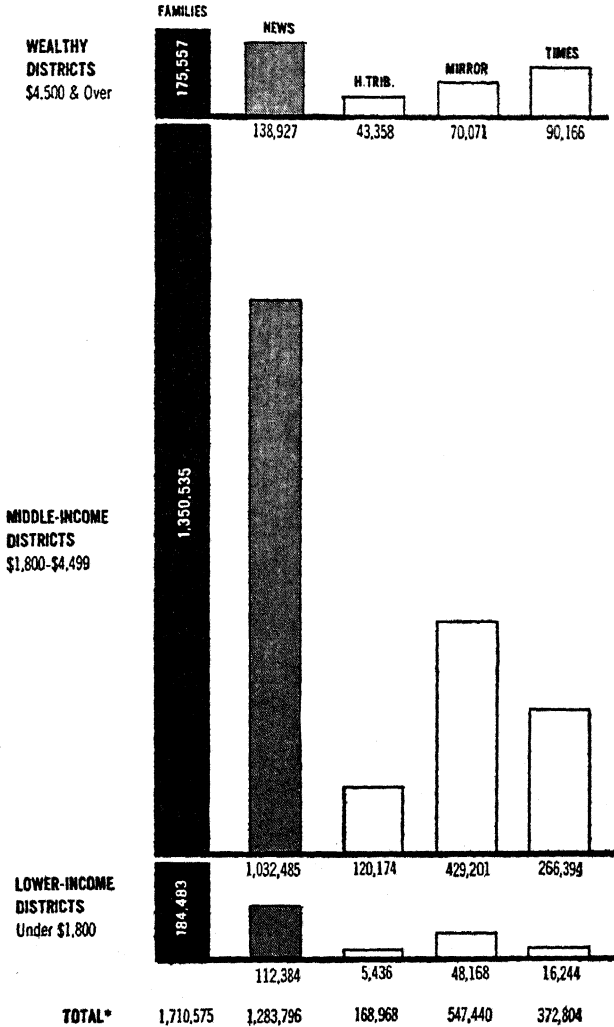
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represented by those districts in which the median annual family expenditure was less than \$1,800; the middle class by those between \$1,800 and \$4,499 and the upper class by those above \$4,500. Two districts of Manhattan Island—Battery Park (the financial area) and Times Square—are excluded because their population is almost entirely transient. There is no way of telling what economic class purchased the papers sold there. The results of this analysis are shown by the chart upon the opposite page.

Since it might be objected that tabloid readers buy both tabloids and, therefore, it would be inaccurate to designate each copy as indicative of an individual reader, we shall concentrate only upon the larger one, the *Daily News*. As the chart shows, the *News* sold a total of 1,283,796 copies in the entire city, more than half the combined total of all morning papers. Of this total, 112,384 copies or 8.8 per cent went to the lower economic class; 1,032,485 copies or 80.4 per cent went to the middle class and 138,927 copies or 10.8 per cent went to the upper class.

These percentages, of course, do not establish the economic position of tabloid readers with absolute mathematical accuracy. But, they do show clearly that more than half of the tabloid audience is composed of middle class people and that tabloid reading is spread proportionately through all classes from bottom to top. Similar calculations for the *Times* reveal a distribution of 24.2 per cent to the upper class, 71.4 per cent to the

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* Excludes undistricted data, also Manhattan Districts 1 and 10 (Battery Park and Times Square), where sales of papers to transients exceed those to residents.

Circulations are as of Sept., 1937 except Her. Trib. (1936). Families and circulations are plotted 300,000 to the inch;

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middle class and 4.4 per cent to the lower class. Although this shows the *Times* to have a proportionately larger upper class following than the tabloid, it is noticeable that, by absolute number, the *News* sells 48,761 more copies in the upper class districts than does the *Times*.

Further information on tabloid distribution according to the economic classification of readers is offered by a survey of the "Newspaper Reading Habits of Automobile Owners in New York City and Suburbs" compiled by the *News* in 1936. Attendants in one hundred and twenty-eight gasoline stations throughout the metropolitan area asked 16,494 automobile owners which newspaper they read. Forty-nine per cent answered, "the *News*." The totals were split according to the price of the car and it was discovered that the *News* was read by 50 per cent of those who drove cars in the lower-priced group, 49 per cent of those in the middle-priced group and 40 per cent of those in the upper-priced group. In each class, the *News* was reported by almost twice as many persons as the nearest competitor. Furthermore, this must be weighted with the consideration that some of the replies were probably conditioned by the still prevalent prejudice against the tabloid.

It is thus evident that according to economic classification tabloid readers come from each level of society. The majority are members of the middle class but the upper and lower classes are proportionately repre-

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sented. In sum, the tabloid audience in New York City cuts across class lines and includes a cross-section of the entire urban population. To describe the tabloid following in greater detail would necessitate figures on occupation, education, racial origin, etc., which are not available. However, it may be inferred from the economic groupings that the tabloid is read by every type of New Yorker.

What about the tabloid readers outside of New York? Precise figures such as those used in studying New York are not available but certain inferences can be made. Not counting the *News* and the *Mirror*, there were in 1936, 47 daily tabloids in the entire United States with a combined circulation of approximately 1,293,847. Actually, the total was larger than this because only 43 papers reported their circulations; the other four were new and had no certified figures for the year. The *News* and the *Mirror* together sold 419,184 copies a day outside of New York City in addition to the 1,820,787 which they distributed within the five boroughs. Thus, 1,713,031 tabloids were read each day by persons outside New York City—almost exactly the same total as that for the Metropolitan Area.

Eliminating the *News* and the *Mirror* from consideration, let us see where these 1,293,847 copies of tabloids went. Six tabloids were published in large cities whose populations exceeded 600,000. These were Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Philadel-

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phia and Washington, D.C. and their total tabloid circulation was 1,040,173. The remaining 243,674 copies of tabloids were distributed by 37 papers in towns of less than 100,000 ranging all over the country from Hastings, Nebraska to New Smyrna, Florida and from Mount Pleasant, Texas to Belle Fourche, South Dakota. The 140,000 copies of the *Daily News* which were sold outside of New York City covered an area including every state in the Union, Canada, Cuba, Haiti, Bermuda, Mexico, England and France. The tabloid was read over the entire geographic breadth of the land by dwellers in small towns as well as inhabitants of large cities.

The statistics, thus, portray tabloid readers as composite Americans whose features reflect every section of the country and every level of society. The mathematically typical tabloid reader is a middle class New Yorker. But the answer to the question of who reads the tabloids is, "more than three and one-half million average Americans each day in the week."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



IN MODERN society newspapers play a double role. As an active force, they exert influence upon the development of journalism and, to a certain extent, upon the habits of their readers. And, in a more passive sense, they act as mirrors of contemporary life reflecting the atmosphere of their time and place. The meaning of the tabloid is disclosed by the manner with which it has discharged this double function.

In 1927 the *New Republic* estimated the importance of the tabloid in these words :

“A quarter of a century ago, 90 per cent of the influence of Hearst on public manners and morals was exerted, not through the columns of his papers, but through those of his imitators whose sheets outnumber his own a hundred to one. In the same manner, we find today, that even papers which seem safely beyond the reach of tabloid competition are alarmed by their mushroom growth and tend to imitate many of their most undesirable characteristics. It is not really true that there is a Gresham’s Law of journalism by which the baser metal drives out the true coinage, but since the publishers seem to believe that this is the case, we

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get, temporarily at least, the same gravely undesirable results." ✓

Except for the familiar note of disapproval which marked most utterances on the subject, this was an accurate diagnosis. In 1919 publishers had been certain that the tabloid was a fleeting stunt. But as the picture papers spread across the country and acquired unprecedented followings, scorn gave way to doubt and soon the inevitable process of imitation had begun. By the middle twenties the journalistic procession had moved so far along the new path that Silas Bent could assert, "The daily eight-column newspaper, in very truth, is tarred with the stick of the tabloid; tarred with its pictures, its format, its headlines, its sensationalism, its rowdyism, its meddlesomeness."

Even the eminently respectable *New York Times* reflected the influence of the tabloid. During the twenty days of the Hall-Mills trial, the *Times* poured forth 528,000 words of information and comment upon the lurid case while the *Daily News* was able to produce only a paltry 223,000. For the first Tunney-Dempsey prize-fight in 1926, the *Times* used the same size front-page headline with which it had announced the Armistice.

When the *Times* of 1920 is compared with that of the present day, one gets a more complete picture of the change. The issue for March 1, 1920 did not contain a single picture, had less than one full page of sports news and the entire feature content consisted of

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two inches on the theater by Alexander Woollcott, a half column of movie reviews, the "Topics of the Times" and a short poem. On an average day in 1938 the same paper had a picture on almost every news page, five full pages of sports, a full page of society news and these features: columns on books, art, music, dance, sports, politics, theater news, movie gossip, reviews of plays and pictures, "Topics of the Times" and the perennial poem. In tabloid manner, the *Times* had adopted the practice of heading important news stories with a brief digest of the highlights (a "tabloid" of the story).

The tendencies manifested by the nation's most austere daily were echoed with greater emphasis by every newspaper in the country. Taking their cue from the tabloid, editors were learning that it is profitable to concentrate upon one story at a time, playing it up until the last drop of interest has been drained. For two weeks in February, 1925, every front page in the land was devoted to the story of an obscure man who had been imprisoned by a landslide in a Kentucky cave which he had been exploring in an effort to find a lure for tourists. Floyd Collins became a national hero. A short while later, more than fifty men were killed in a North Carolina mine but the incident was hardly mentioned. The excitement over Collins had killed the drama of subterranean stories.

In their selection of stories, all newspapers came to adopt the values of the tabloid. Attention was concen-

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trated upon sex, crime, sport and sentiment. More than 12,000,000 words—enough to fill 400,000 pages of ordinary book size—were sent out by the wires from the scene of the Hall-Mills trial. During the Scopes “monkey” trial in which evolution was declared contrary to Tennessee law, more than 2,000,000 words were dispatched by telegraph alone. Bobby Jones, Red Grange, Babe Ruth, Mary Pickford, Doug Fairbanks, Peaches Browning and, above all, Charles Augustus Lindbergh were the heroes of the day. Nor did this emphasis upon personalities and sensations die with the coming of the depression. Though in a less excited manner, today’s front page is still devoted to the same interests.

Even greater than its effect upon the presentation of the news was the tabloid’s influence upon other parts of the newspaper. Devotion to features became so intense that “the side-shows threatened to swallow the main tent.” Like the modern drug store, the daily newspaper adopted so many supplementary items that the article upon which its name had been based became almost an incidental. In addition to material which can be classed as news or editorial interpretation, the typical American daily in 1938 contained the following miscellany: cartoons, recipes, style patterns, child advice, health comment, question and answer column, society column, beauty information, comics, romance assistance, contests, puzzles, games, radio comment, Hollywood gossip, Broadway items, book reviews,

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sports features, oddities, fiction, etiquette and pictures. These were just the standard items; each paper had several additional specialties.

But, the greatest influence of the tabloid was exerted in the field of photography. Before the War, pictures had been a sort of fillip used to spice an occasional story. Cameramen were regarded as just above the level of manual laborers, useful at times, but hardly essential. When the tabloid taught its readers to expect a picture with every story, the large papers were forced to imitate this popular practice. They did not attempt to produce an illustration for each account but the sports, entertainment and society pages were always decorated with pictures and the rotogravure section became a weekly feature of every newspaper in the country. When anything really important occurred—a big athletic event, a major political happening, a great tragedy or a stirring crime—the big papers learned to carry as many, if not more pictures than the tabloid.

The Louis-Braddock prize-fight elicited two full pages of pictures in the New York *World-Telegram*. During the fall of 1937, the Sunday rotogravure section of the *Times* contained more pictures of football than of any other single subject. When President Roosevelt was inaugurated, every paper in New York devoted several pages to pictures of the event. The recent explosion of the dirigible *Hindenburg* put a grim scene upon every front page in the country. And wher

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Ronnie Gedeon, "the beautiful artist's model," was murdered on Easter morning in 1937, many of the large-size papers outdid the tabloids in exploiting her much-photographed body.

This was the pattern stamped upon the American daily newspaper during the post-War years—concentration upon one story, play-up of crime, sensation and sport, increasing devotion to features and greater use of pictures. The tabloid, of course, was not the only factor behind these changes. They were entirely harmonious with the course of American journalism since the Pulitzer-Hearst days. What happened after 1919 was merely a modernization and extension of the yellow technique. Furthermore, these changes were so consistent with the current of popular desires that they would probably have come in the course of time even without the tabloid stimulus. How well these changes were rooted in popular tastes is shown by a survey of "What the Readers Read in Newspapers" compiled by Dr. George Gallup and printed in 1938.

This study showed that men's attention is accorded in the following order: (1) one news story, (2) picture page, (3) comics, (4) editorial cartoon, (5) oddities cartoon, (6) leading sports story, (7) weather report, (8) radio program and so forth. Women show a similar preference for one news story, pictures and comics, but, instead of sports, they turn next to style pictures. The best read parts of the newspaper are pre-

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cisely those upon which increasing emphasis has been placed in recent years—a single news story, pictures, features and sports.

Since these were the dominant interests of the reading public, they would inevitably have expressed themselves by evoking changes in daily journalism similar to those noted above. But, the tabloid was the active agent which dramatized popular desires and compelled publishers of large-size newspapers to imitate its ways. Whether this influence was good or bad is a problem for psychiatrists and sociologists. One fact, however, is evident. Whatever its effects and whatever its moral worth, the attitude embodied in the tabloid was but a journalistic reflection of the currents which were sweeping through every phase of post-War American life.

It is from this perspective that the new journalism reveals its deepest significance. How did it fit into the patterns of its period? What does it tell us about trends in the United States since the War? The answers to these questions comprise the meaning of the tabloid.

The outstanding characteristics of the tabloid were its pictures, sensationalism, brevity, features and emphasis of sport. Each of these features was an adaptation to contemporary developments in other fields.

During the twenties, the prevalent attitude toward the daily newspaper was summed up in the common saying, "You can't believe all you read in the newspa-

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pers." The War and the disillusioning peace treaty had produced a spirit of wary cynicism. As George Jean Nathan expressed it, "The boob no longer believes anything he reads in the papers but he does believe everything he sees." Where word accounts would be distrusted a picture was accepted as convincing. Not only were pictures convincing, they were also vivid beyond everything except actual participation. For example, the grim scene reproduced upon the opposite page burned itself so deeply in American memories that the *Hindenburg* tragedy will be remembered long after other dirigible disasters have been forgotten. This picture is also interesting because it illustrates the change in attitude toward camera reporting. At the annual photography exhibition in Radio City in January, 1938, it was awarded first prize as the best action shot of the year. News pictures had become Art.

In fact, by 1938 it was safe to say that the average citizen acquired most of his news through the medium of pictures. Over 20,000,000 Americans go to the movies each day in the week and the news reel is a regular part of every motion picture program. In most large cities there are separate news reel theaters. Supplementing the newspaper and the movie are the picture magazines which now sell several million copies each week. Although they deal with many varied subjects, the backbone of these new periodicals rests upon pictures of the news. Every phase of American journalism—newspapers, movies and magazines—has

The set paid circulation for April exceeded Daily—1,700,000 Sunday—3,000,000

DAILY NEWS

Published 1917 by News Syndicate Co., Inc., 237 W. 4th St., New York, N. Y.

NEW YORK'S



PICTURE NEWSPAPER

Entered as 2nd class matter, Post Office, New York, N. Y.

FINAL

V. L. 18, No. 270

New York, Friday, May 7, 1937*

76 Mails

2 Washington Post
2 Backhouse

2 Cents 91 CENTS * 4 CENTS

ZEP BLOWS UP

35 DEAD; MANY INJURED

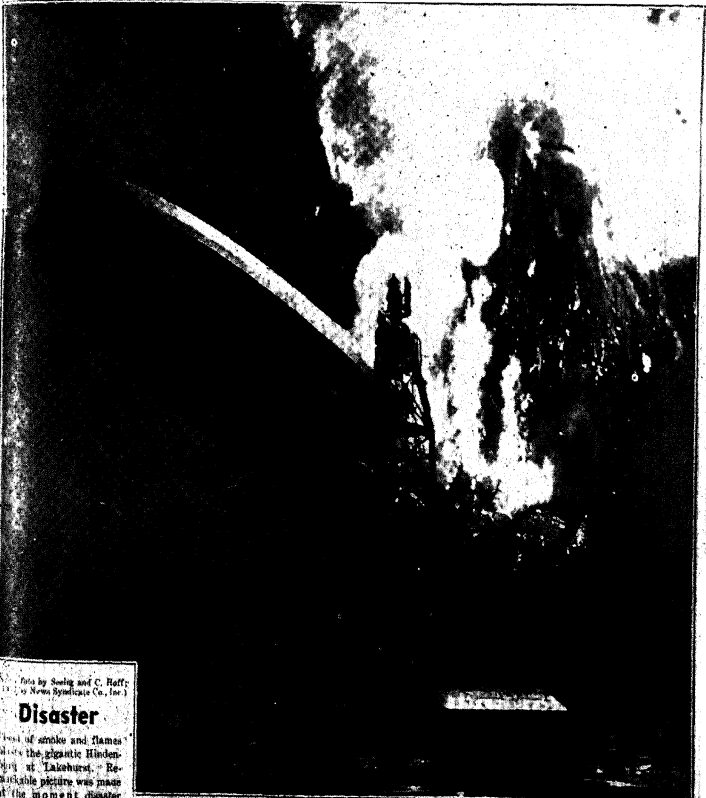


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blaze the gigantic Hindenburg
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WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

come to rely upon pictures. And when television is perfected much of the news will be seen as it happens.

Equally harmonious with the course of American life was the tabloid's emphasis of sex, crime and sensation. Despite the quest for "normalcy" which marked the political spirit, the actual motif of the period was one of great excitement and sweeping change. This psychological atmosphere was produced by the interaction of many forces, but perhaps the most influential were the reaction to the War, Prohibition, the automobile, the revolt of youth against the old taboos, the discovery of Sex, the rebellion of women against Victorian restraints and the general advance of mechanical developments. These and other impulses combined to create a mood of restlessness and abandon which was responsible for the exaggerations characteristic of the era.

When the tabloid took its readers into Daddy Browning's boudoir, when it delved into the details of Ruth Snyder's relations with Judd Gray, when it idolized Rudolph Valentino and when it filled its pages with pictures of unclad females, it was answering the same appeal that produced other phenomena of the twenties—the speakeasies, night clubs, necking parties, companionate marriage and the other components of a "liberated" morality. Every facet of the national scene displayed counterparts of the tabloid's sensationalism.

"Millions of men and women turned their atten-

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tion, their talk and their emotional interest upon a series of tremendous trifles." One day everybody would be excited about Coué and the next day it would be Mah Jong. New York would turn itself upside down welcoming Gertrude Ederle and, almost before the debris had been removed, the same ecstasy would be aroused over Lindy. The country had hardly time to gather its breath after shouting "Yes, We Have No Bananas" when it was furiously trying to solve crossword puzzles. But, the basic principle was always the same—each sensation must be greater than the previous one.

The tabloid's brevity was similarly harmonious with the period. During the post-War years, more than ever before, "the ceaseless activity and jaded mental condition characteristic of the average American led him to value brevity and hurry above all other virtues." The universal passion for speed and simplicity manifested itself in many ways. Eating was accelerated by the spread of drug store "quick lunch" counters and automat cafeterias. Movement was hastened by subways, swift automobiles and airplanes. Reading matter was condensed into digest magazines and one weekly adopted the practice of informing its readers in advance how long it would take them to consume each article or story.

A clue to the reason behind the tabloid's devotion to features is offered by the following advertisement printed by the *Daily News* in January, 1938 :

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

ROMANCE A DAY

You'll like the daily short story in the *News*. It takes a short time to read. And gives you a little reprieve from the day's routine. These stories are particularly fitted to the metropolitan scene—lovers on the Library steps, in the nooks of Grand Central, in a restaurant on Liberty Street. Adventure on the waterfront, in Harlem, at Coney Island.

As Americans concentrated in large cities, the old simple amusements were no longer satisfying. The daily grind of office, factory and home produced a restless longing for diversion and adventure which was answered by the movies and the radio. In competition with these new media of entertainment, the newspaper was forced to increase its "relaxation" content. The tabloid's comics, columnists, games, contests and romantic stories were but a twentieth century citified transformation of hay-rides, quilting parties, cracker-barrel gossip, horse-shoe pitching and fireside yarn spinning.

In similar fashion, the twenties witnessed a gigantic expansion of athletics. Sports became second only to the movies as a national diversion. Golf links spread across the country and the clubhouse became the center of upper middle class social life. Thousands who had never come any closer to college than a correspondence course crammed into stadiums to watch football games. Well co-ordinated young men who excelled in eluding tacklers became famous heroes. Women picked up

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their skirts and vied with the men in performing feats of physical prowess. The manufacture of sporting goods became a large scale industry. Athletic contests of all kinds attracted enormous audiences and the outcome of a prize-fight became a universal subject of conversation. For those who were unable to attend, the radio broadcast eye-witness accounts of these twentieth century tourneys and the newspapers printed the results on the first page.

The tabloid reflected the outstanding characteristics of the era—excitement, candid interest in sex and crime, hurry and an intense application to diversion. These factors do not, of course, make up a complete picture of the twenties but they do form a sketch of the period's highlights. When the depression changed the national spirit from abandon to seriousness, common life continued to be marked by the same interests, expressed in somewhat different manner, but basically the same. For, these tendencies were not peculiar to a time of financial prosperity. They were America's response to the circumstances of modern life. And, just as the tabloid had mirrored the gay years, it now reacted in sympathy with the trends of the grim years.

A natural offspring of America's industrialized democracy, the tabloid has learned to time its beat with the pulse of the common people. With an exaggeration shared by all the national forms of expression, it recounts each day the folklore of our times.

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